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ABSTRACT

The AVID Best Practices Study assessed the relative efficacy of 11 AVID program essentials; examined schoolwide effects of AVID; and identified necessary research-based changes in AVID program essentials or staff development. AVID is an elective program for students that provides rigorous academic focus and addresses essential aspects in college preparation. Eight California high school AVID programs were selected based on consistent high performance by AVID students and recommendations of AVID regional directors. During two rounds of site visits, researchers interviewed key program staff, school staff, tutors, and students; observed AVID and academic classes; and examined program and student documents. Data were collected on adherence to the program design. Overall, each of the eight programs followed the AVID design very exactly. The report proposes that the current 11 essentials be maintained and three new essentials be added: AVID provides support for students to succeed in higher level mathematics; AVID teachers participate in ongoing, high quality staff development through regional coordinator workshops and the AVID Summer Institute; and the AVID site coordinator must be a seasoned, highly respected, and dedicated senior teacher with specific knowledge and skills. The paper describes the eight schools, focusing on how they incorporate AVID essentials. (SM)

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Center for Research, Evaluation, And Training in Education

The Magnificent Eight: AVID Best Practices Study

FINAL REPORT

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February, 2002

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CREATE was funded by the AVID Center in 2001 to conduct the AVID Best Practices Study. The purposes of the study were to assess the relative efficacy of the 11 AVID Program Essentials and explore whether other program features are also critical to program goals; examine schoolwide effects of AVID; and identify and recommend changes in AVID program essentials or staff development that AVID Center might make based on research findings.

The concept of "best practices" research implies that, through the careful study of successful programs in a small number of school sites, the specific features of the programs that account for their success can be identified. In this study, eight high school AVID programs in California were selected based on existing records of consistent high performance by AVID students (such as academic achievement, college acceptance and attendance rates) as well as the recommendations of AVID regional directors. CREATE conducted two rounds of site visits to each site, interviewing key program and school staff, tutors, and students; observing a number of AVID and academic classes; and examining program and student documents. Table 1 presents basic information about the eight AVID programs: their location, school and AVID program enrollment, number of AVID sections and teachers, and college applications and acceptances for seniors.

This report is divided into two parts. In Part One, we report the findings by describing the eight programs in terms of their implementation of and fidelity to the existing 11 AVID program essentials as well as three additional essentials that we recommend the AVID Center to adopt. Next, we present our findings on the schoolwide impact of AVID. In Part Two, we describe each of the Magnificent Eight in more detail, with special attention to how AVID essentials are incorporated into their programs.

PART ONE: AVID PROGRAM ESSENTIALS

A key finding—and one that we did not necessarily expect—was that each of the eight programs followed the AVID design almost to the letter. Their adherence to AVID program design was perhaps most evident in the way AVID tutorials operated—*exactly* as described in AVID documents. Students completed tutorial sheets prior to the class and organized themselves into groups with the help of tutors. The tutorials were exemplars of inquiry learning; we rarely saw students doing homework. This fidelity to the AVID model extended to other aspects of the program as well: recruitment, participation, scheduling, curriculum, and organization.

Based on the study, we propose that the current 11 essentials be maintained—there was no indication that any of these was unnecessary—and that three new essentials be added. The first and third of these we see as clear additions to the current list; the second is currently embedded in the essential concerning resources. The three added essentials address the issues of mathematics, staff development, and the AVID coordinator. The essentials will be most effective if they are kept clear and concise so that all practitioners can internalize and remember all 14 with ease. In short, we recommend a baker's dozen-plus-one essentials. The final essential is the lynchpin of a truly successful AVID program.

Table 1
The Magnificent 8 AVID Programs at a Glance

High School	City	Enrollment School	Enrollment AVID	% AVID	AVID Sections	AVID Teachers	Seniors	4-Year College Applied	4-Year College Accepted
Central Union	El Centro	1637	209	13%	8	5	36	32	27
Coachella Valley	Thermal	2959	159	5%	6	3	24	24	22
Colton	Colton	2848	262	9%	11	3	36	35	34
Fallbrook	Fallbrook	2740	186	7%	6	3	29	29	29
Loara	Anaheim	2108	132	6%	4	1	20	20	20
Ramona	Riverside	1986	398	20%	12	6	78	78	78
Southwest	San Diego	2100	177	8%	6	3	24	23	15
Valley	Elk Grove	2281	110	5%	6	3	26	23	23

1. **AVID Student selection focuses on students in the middle (2.0-3.5 GPA's as one indicator) with academic potential, who would benefit from AVID support to improve their academic record and begin college preparation.**

   All eight programs give this essential a high priority. AVID coordinators are emphatic in their support of this essential and see it as the key to program success. If the right students aren't admitted, the program won't succeed. Each spring, AVID teams begin the student identification and selection process, visiting feeder schools and assessing currently enrolled freshmen. Despite the temptation to admit students outside the specified "middle" range, and some pressure from administrators to select lower-performing students, the AVID programs religiously adhere to the specific guidelines, because they have found—through trial and error—that they work. Several coordinators admitted having adjusted the GPA criteria on occasion to admit higher- or lower-performing students. Invariably, however, they concluded that the AVID guidelines were correct: students above the range will soon decide they don't need the extra work and support that AVID provides, and students below the range will find the work and requirements too demanding.

   The teachers' belief in the validity of the selection process is also seen in their commitment to AVID students. Convinced that students have been correctly identified, the teachers do all within their power to keep students in the program, providing them with additional support and counseling. Both teachers and students are aware that in the sophomore year, when the demands increase, the goals of the program may seem too distant for some students, and they may contemplate dropping AVID. At this crucial juncture, we found AVID teachers step up their efforts to motivate students to stay with the program. Seniors we talked to described how from the junior year on, the purpose was clear and they didn't need any extra incentives to stay committed to the program.

2. **AVID program participants, both students and staff, must choose to participate.**

   All the programs reported this essential was indispensable; teachers and students must volunteer for the program. All but two of the eight AVID coordinators started AVID on their campus many years ago, and the motivation that led them to AVID remains strong. The two exceptions were teachers who volunteered to take over the program when the original coordinator left, but each has managed to maintain a close working relationship with the original coordinator. In one school, after the first coordinator left for personal reasons, the school administrator assigned AVID to another teacher; and it turned out to be a mistake. The new coordinator asked to be reassigned after one year and even left the teaching profession entirely shortly afterwards. The other AVID teachers must choose to be a part of AVID also. At one school, the coordinator invited two prospective AVID teachers to the AVID Summer Institute; when they failed to attend, she said their message to her was clear—they didn't really want to teach AVID. Wisely, she began to search for other candidates immediately.

With regard to students, both teachers and students in the schools agree that a commitment and willingness to take part and to do the hard work is necessary. Some teachers insist that the interview is a critical component in the student selection process—that is when you can really tell if the student wants to participate. And they never sugar-coat AVID requirements in the interview. It's important to be up-front with students when describing the program. To maintain the discipline and work load that AVID requires, students have to be motivated from within.

3. **The school must be committed to full implementation of the AVID program, with the AVID elective class available within the regular academic school day.**

School and district administrators provided necessary support for all eight programs to function fully. In most cases, tutors were funded directly from the district; in others, the school site team allocated the resources to AVID as a matter of routine. When budget reductions or other competing programs threatened AVID, the strength of the program and its reputation prevailed. In one case, after news of districtwide funding cuts that would affect AVID reached the school, a few carefully chosen phone calls managed to get the bulk of the money restored in the budget. In another, a competing campus program sought to siphon off AVID students, but the AVID coordinator put her foot down and the plan was scuttled. As one coordinator said, "if you have a program that works, they tend to give you what you want."

AVID classes were scheduled within the school day, with one exception. At one school, the AVID senior seminar met at "0" period, partly to accommodate seniors' schedules, but did not affect the overall implementation of the AVID program. All other AVID classes at that school met within the regular school day.

The eight programs "work" for many reasons; one of them is that the implementation of the program is complete. From the binder checks to the tutorials, these programs are doing "AVID." Teachers have internalized the AVID essentials to the extent that fidelity to the AVID program design is not something they have to think about. This is not to say that they have not made certain adjustments to match the conditions of their school and students. But the changes were at the level of dialing the minimum GPA up two-tenths of a point form 2.0 to 2.2, or giving seniors a slight break on the required Cornell Notes each week. The AVID teachers occasionally engaged in a process of fine-tuning as they sought ways to make their program as good as it could be. "I've tried tweaking this program every way you can tweak it," one teacher said, but admitted that she almost always came back to the AVID guidelines. "Select students with a little higher profile, and they're here for one year and out."

4. **AVID students must be enrolled in a rigorous course of study that will enable them to meet requirements for university enrollment.**

AVID's expanded emphasis on AP and honors courses was clearly evident in the eight schools. AP has been opened up, with admissions criteria largely eliminated in the schools. As a result, at one school, the number of students enrolled in AP courses

doubled in the last three years, and the number of AP sections increased by one-third. The number of students taking AP exams at Southwest went from less than 300 to over 700 in four years. AVID students make up nearly 50% of the students in AP at Ramona, even though they represent only 20% of the total student population; at Coachella, they account for 30% of AP, but only 6% of the school enrollment.

AVID programs now require all AVID students to enroll in at least one AP course in their four years. All AP math students at Southwest must enroll in AVID to provide them with the additional support they may need; otherwise, alternative support such as tutoring is provided. The Ramona principal reflected the view of other administrators: "You won't walk into an AP class and not see AVID students."

The strategies for enrolling students in a rigorous course of study varied across the schools. At some schools, the AVID coordinators have managed to gain control over student scheduling by assigning AVID students to a select group of teachers and their courses. At other schools, a single counselor is responsible for all the AVID students' schedules. At Ramona, for example, AVID has developed a close relationship with that counselor and thus has considerable influence over the placement of its students. In still other schools, AVID receives practically no special treatment in scheduling.

The AVID classroom also plays an important role in providing students skills and information they need for college admission, from college applications and test-taking strategies, to writing essays. In fact, a hallmark of these programs is that they never lose sight of the objective, i.e., enrolling their students in a four-year university. Virtually every activity is tied to college entrance. In Central Union's senior seminar, for example, students don't write an essay that isn't related to college entrance.

5. **A strong, relevant writing curriculum provides the basis for instruction in the AVID elective class.**

Writing is the core of the AVID curriculum from freshman to senior year in all eight schools. One reason the programs are strong is that they are built upon a foundation of writing. The AVID curriculum works, according to the coordinator at Fallbrook, because it gives students the tools they need for college: writing, time management, tutorials, and how to get help when you need it.

While AVID teachers have traditionally come from the discipline of English, several of the study schools have managed to create truly multidisciplinary teams, enlisting AVID teachers from math, social studies, business, physical education, and history. All recognize the central importance of writing, however. A former physical education teacher overcame self-doubts about her capabilities as a writing teacher by carefully reviewing the AVID curriculum libraries with her team over a 3-month period. She finally realized that, as an AVID teacher, she could also apply her coaching skills to writing and academics. Similarly, the math teachers found ways to become better writing teachers. A veteran AVID and math teacher at Ramona said he learned a lot about teaching writing and developed a unique way to teach his class.

6. **Inquiry is used as a basis for instruction in the AVID elective.**

AVID teachers in the eight programs invariably listed tutors and the tutorial as the centerpiece of the program, the key ingredient to success. "Without tutors, you don't have an AVID program," they said. The strength of AVID, one said, lies in putting writing as the foundation, and providing students access to trained college tutors who guide students toward critical thinking. Indeed, the tutorials we observed focused on learning through inquiry rather than test preparation and homework completion. In contrast, at other AVID programs we have visited, the tutorial often has the flavor of a study hall, with students preparing their homework or chatting among themselves.

One teacher contrasted her tutorial groups with those at the feeder school where students were only required to come with a single question, and once it was answered, they could turn to their homework. At the high school, on the other hand, tutors run the groups by the book, with inquiry as the vehicle for learning. The tutors in each of the programs were adamant about how the tutorials were conducted. One tutor made it clear to us that he didn't give students the answers but guided them toward a solution.

As described above, tutorial days were routinized: Students arrived at the class with their tutorial sheet completed and questions prepared; then they organized themselves into groups with the help of tutors. The classrooms had specific areas designated for different content areas, so there was no confusion about where to form the groups, and we did not see teachers trying to figure out which students went with which group. In fact, the teachers relied on the students and tutors to organize themselves. In the groups, we saw students unafraid to ask questions or to question others; they were learning to assess their own understanding, developing an awareness of what they knew, not only in their reflection at the end of the period, but throughout.

7. **Collaboration is used as a basis for instruction in the AVID classroom.**

In the AVID classrooms of the eight schools, students worked in small groups, and tutors were trained to encourage collaboration. The students we interviewed talked about how they learned to help and learn from each other, relying on themselves for answers. Teachers also modeled this behavior and culture of collaboration in their interactions with each other. Several commented, in fact, that the close proximity of their classrooms was a key ingredient to the success of their program, allowing them to work closely as a team. At Loara, where there is only one AVID teacher, the spirit of collaboration and camaraderie is evident in the tutorial groups and throughout the day in the AVID classroom.

8. **A sufficient number of tutors are available in the AVID class to facilitate student access to rigorous curriculum.**

All the AVID teachers readily admitted that the tutors make AVID work. Three of the eight programs are located far from a four-year college campuses, and have some

difficulty in attracting tutors because they are unable to provide college students with enough hours of work to justify driving half an hour each way. To make it more attractive, several schools provide tutoring before/after school and at lunch, both to AVID students and others; and at least one school, Coachella, has increased the hourly pay rate. Central Union, in El Centro, has come to rely on community college students in the valley because of the city's isolation. Some of the programs have also begun to train advanced seniors to serve as AVID tutors. At Loara, for instance, senior AVID students tutor in 9th and 10th grade AVID classes. All the programs insist that tutors complete the AVID tutor training.

Tutors are recruited largely from within the AVID program. They have experienced the tutorial process as a student, and they also understand the kind of guidance AVID students need. "The best tutors come from my program," the Loara coordinator observed. The coordinator at Southwest said she *only* recruited her former students. Not only do they know the program and the needs of the students, but they often live in the same apartments as the AVID students and see each other in the community.

Math skills have also become an important criterion in selecting tutors, because that is the area where the majority of students in each tutorial seek assistance. In several of the tutorials we observed, as many as two-thirds of the students were working on math, with groups divided by course. For the five programs without an AVID teacher from the math department, identifying tutors who can help students with advanced math is doubly important.

9. **AVID program implementation and student progress are monitored through the AVID Data System, and results are analyzed to ensure success.**

Data occupy a central position in the eight AVID programs. They use it to measure their own progress, direct program planning, and publicize program successes within and outside the school. As one administrator put it, "data validate the program to outside agencies, the school board, and in the trenches—with other teachers." The principal at Fallbrook echoed this sentiment: "The success of the program proves its worth for the school board—AVID gets results." These and other administrators have come to appreciate the fact that AVID is accountable and shares its findings. As there is more and more demand for evidence of program success, AVID is a leader in these schools, setting an example for other programs. Other teachers also find AVID's approach more convincing because they know it is data-driven.

The AVID coordinators routinely report to the school, district administrators, school board, and others. At Valley, the coordinator has ensured the continuity of her program and fostered AVID expansion throughout the district by periodically presenting data on program outcomes. In her capacity as district AVID coordinator, she models the use of data for other AVID teachers. In the classroom, she coaches students on how to read transcripts, figure class rank, and interpret data on college going rates.

At Southwest, the principal has taken AVID's emphasis on data schoolwide; teachers are coached in ways to use and reflect on data. The principal periodically shares data on student progress and has teachers reflect on what the data show and what they might do differently in their classrooms. In addition, just as the AVID site team is accountable collectively, each department is now responsible for student progress.

10. **The school or district has identified resources for program costs, has agreed to implement AVID Program Implementation Essentials and to participate in AVID Certification, and has committed to ongoing participation in AVID staff development.**

All eight programs enjoy the support of the district and school administration, even though some have had to fight on occasion for continued or increased levels of support along the way. In times of financial constraints, or because of administrative personnel changes, AVID becomes vulnerable along with other programs. All the coordinators recognize that they cannot thrive without the resources provided by the district or school. In most cases, tutors and other budget items are paid directly by the district, and, for the most part, AVID coordinators consider their programs to be well-funded.

They are also aware that they must remain vigilant. One program weathered a recent budget storm successfully because of its size and record of success. Another fought to survive by creating an academy-like auxiliary program that expanded its size without diluting the core AVID program. A third coordinator has learned to stay under the radar in order not to attract too much attention and limit interference from the current administrator who has his own idea about who AVID should serve.

11. **An active interdisciplinary site team collaborates on issues of student access to and success in rigorous college preparatory classes.**

This may be the one essential most difficult for some of the programs to live up to, because of the tension between fostering a close-knit AVID family and having an impact schoolwide. At a school where the site team plays a prominent role, the AVID teachers used the AVID Summer Institute as a launching pad for the site team and to grow the program. They started by training the Honors and AP teachers, and once trained, these teachers not only welcomed AVID students in their classes, but became members of the AVID site team. Once this group of AVID-trained teachers grew too large, a subset of the trained teachers began meeting regularly as the site team. At another school, the AVID teachers, principal, counselors, and several other teachers meet bi-weekly at 7 a.m. to discuss recruitment, testing, and other issues. Even here, though, the principal and the other teachers acknowledge that the AVID coordinator was the driving force behind the program.

At the other extreme are the coordinators who keep their program fairly small and close-knit; while they maintain good relations with other teachers and regularly seek their help, decision-making is not shared. Their priority is on maintaining a family-

like atmosphere, rather than having an effect schoolwide. An informal site team of four or five teachers meets, but the other members are largely on the receiving end of communication about the program. Without an active site team, a program risks becoming isolated from the rest of the school or too much identified with only one person. One coordinator believes that a new AVID program should start small, enlisting friends from the faculty for the team; then after a few years, when the school is grounded in AVID, there is room for some flexibility. An established AVID coordinator, for example, can enlist support from any number of teachers, not just those on the formal site team.

Proposed Additional Essentials

12. AVID provides support for students to succeed in higher level mathematics.

Math has become the primary gatekeeper for admission to college. As one of the AVID teachers in the study observed, "Math gets you into college, and writing keeps you there." The best AVID programs have found ways to ensure that their students are well-prepared in math, but those strategies need to be part of every program. First, AVID must see that students are enrolled in a sequence of mathematics courses necessary for university admission, beginning with algebra in the 9th grade at the latest. Second, AVID needs to provide support for students to succeed in rigorous math courses, either through the identification of skilled tutors or through the math department. Finally, the AVID program might recruit new AVID teachers from the math department to solidify the program's emphasis on math. Our research showed that with training and support, especially from the other AVID teachers, math teachers can effectively develop students' writing skills as mandated for the AVID elective.

13. AVID teachers participate in on-going, high quality staff development through the regional coordinator workshops and the AVID Summer Institute.

Attendance at the monthly AVID coordinator workshops and the AVID Summer Institute are critical resources for the AVID coordinators. Even though veterans of many years, the AVID coordinators in the Best Practices Study are religious in their participation in the monthly meetings and full of praise for the resources and ideas they access there, as well as the AVID Summer Institute. One of the teachers said once she joined AVID, she embraced the idea of personal development for herself and had taken advantage of the many opportunities to increase her skills and knowledge, both at the County Office of Education and the AVID Summer Institute. "I saw it as adding to the tools in my basket," she said. As described below, they also are careful to educate themselves about the particulars of college admissions counseling.

14. The AVID site coordinator must be a seasoned, highly-respected, and dedicated senior teacher with specific knowledge and skills. The AVID coordinator must be an expert in college admissions, public relations, and other special areas.

As competition for admission to four-year universities increases, the demands on the AVID coordinator to provide more specialized guidance to seniors is increasing. It is no longer enough for the AVID coordinator to walk students through the UC college application process; he or she must be an expert college admissions counselor who is knowledgeable about effective applications, financial aid and scholarship opportunities, and writing winning personal statements. AVID programs cannot afford to rely on the school counselors who usually are only able to provide basic information. Several of the coordinators in the study regularly attend conferences for college admissions counselors. Other coordinators at those schools recognize the specialized knowledge required to teach the senior class and are reluctant to assume that responsibility without specific, targeted training in the college admissions process. In at least one school, the prospective replacement has been auditing the senior seminar to learn the ropes.

The role of the AVID coordinator should also incorporate political and affective skills—aspects of the role of site coordinator that are evident in all eight sites. The eight programs are led by experienced, highly-respected, and energetic professionals who are totally committed to the AVID essentials. Almost all are blessed with natural political *savoir-faire* and motivational skills, like AVID's founder Mary Catherine Swanson. They recognize the public relations and political skills necessary to run a successful AVID program, presenting the public face of the program through presentations to the school board and other bodies, including the school staff, and working effectively with department chairs and other teachers to extend the reach of the program in terms of rigorous course enrollment and adoption of AVID methodologies.

Finally, the AVID coordinator must be able to develop the family atmosphere that is a hallmark of the AVID program. This does not mean mothering the students—some of the most effective AVID teachers in the study were tough task-masters—but that students feel a sense of membership and belonging in relation to the AVID classroom and the other AVID students.

Beyond Essentials: Schoolwide Effects of AVID

Over the past several years, AVID educators have come to recognize the critical impact AVID can have on schoolwide reform. For AVID teachers, however, impacting policies and practices of the entire school presents special challenges, and it seems beyond the scope of their program for some. Our research, for example, has shown that in self-assessments, many AVID teachers considered the least successful aspect of their program to be serving as a catalyst for schoolwide change.

Many AVID schools have adopted certain AVID practices throughout the school, such as student binders or Cornell Notes—the tools of AVID. At others schools, administrators talk of enrolling all students in AVID, but AVID is not designed to serve every student. Neither of these approaches to extending AVID captures entirely our conception of schoolwide effects. Spreading AVID methodologies to other classrooms certainly affects instruction in the school, and offering greater numbers of students AVID-like support broadens the impact of the program. But AVID can transform the

school in other meaningful ways, and we have looked more deeply to see if the philosophy and procedures of AVID have made their way into the organization, curriculum, instruction, and consciousness of the school, its personnel, and students. In the AVID Best Practices Study, we examine what aspects of schooling, including student outcomes, have changed since the introduction of AVID in each of the eight schools.

We found the effects of AVID at several levels within the school. These included the adoption of AVID methodologies, such as student binders, Cornell Notes, and AVID-like tutoring; raised expectations and improved outcomes for students schoolwide; schoolwide reform and use of data; involvement in school-level decision-making; and a positive influence on the school and student culture for learning and college-going. In each of the eight schools, AVID was an essential element in the school's overall program. The administration and faculty were informed about AVID and respected its work. One teacher, for instance, called AVID a "pocket of excellence." At another school, AVID had become integral to the school's core academic activities and part of a comprehensive school plan. At a third, the AVID approach to literacy across the curriculum was the driving force behind schoolwide reform. We describe our findings in each area below.

Adoption of AVID Methodologies

To varying degrees, AVID methods were employed by other teachers in the schools. The schools did not *require* teachers to adopt AVID methods, but strongly encouraged their use. At Central Union, for instance, the principal estimates that 95 percent of the teachers employ Cornell Notes in their classes. At Valley, many teachers require students to keep binders or expect students to keep Cornell Notes. The science department, for example, requires all students to take Cornell Notes and keep an agenda.

Given the success of AVID in the schools, school leaders recognized the power of AVID tutoring as well. Several schools had instituted before- and after-school, and lunchtime drop-in tutoring for all students, and other programs have borrowed the approach as well. For example, Ramona offers four hours of tutoring before/after school and at lunch by AVID tutors. With funding from Title VII, ESL teachers at Central Union received training in AVID strategies and employ AVID-trained tutors in their classrooms. In addition, the school's Legal Services/Law Enforcement Academy uses AVID-like tutoring. In 2002, tutors will be deployed in regular math classes as well. Southwest already requires low-performing freshmen and sophomores to enroll in math support classes for algebra, that operate just like AVID tutorials, two days a week.

In some cases, schools have implemented (or are planning) AVID-like programs. Fallbrook's AVID-Plus is perhaps the best example, where students enroll in the same content area classes as AVID students and receive some support, but without taking the AVID elective class. To serve its many English learners, Coachella Valley will implement an AVID-like program in 2002 that includes tutoring two days a week and uses AVID's College Success Path materials, which are already being used in the school's two academies. Finally, at Ramona, the principal will implement a required freshman study skills class based on AVID methodologies in 2002.

Improved Outcomes and Raised Expectations for Students Schoolwide

In several schools, AVID has helped improve schoolwide student outcomes and raise expectations for all students. Partly as a result of AVID students' successful performance in Advanced Placement and honors classes, access to those courses has opened up for non-traditional students, and the number of courses and sections has increased.

At Ramona, in the 1980s there were no AP courses; now there are 12 courses serving almost 300 students—nearly half are from AVID. AP classes at Valley that used to have six students now enroll 30. Whereas a writing test, grades, and teacher recommendations used to be required for enrollment in some AP courses, the AVID coordinator is now able to schedule her students directly into AP because of AVID's record of success. At Southwest, the number of students enrolled in AP doubled in three years; AP sections went from 16 to 24; and students taking the AP test went from less than 250 to 720 in four years. At Colton, the number of students taking AP exams has grown from five to over 30 since the new AVID coordinator took over in 1998, and in the 10 years since AVID has been on campus, the number taking SATs has more than doubled. AVID students make up 30 percent of the students enrolled in AP courses at Coachella Valley, even though they represent only 5 percent of the total school population.

Higher expectations for all students are evident across the eight schools as well. At Fallbrook, where Hispanics make up 80% of AVID enrollment, but only about one-third of the school, expectations and attitudes toward minority students have changed radically. Hispanic students are now well-represented and welcome in advanced classes, and the number of minority students completing the University of California course requirements and applying to college has increased annually. Across the campus and in the community, AVID has helped create a college-going culture in the Latino community.

Prior to AVID at Ramona, few expected students to go to a four-year college, and counselors directed them toward community colleges. Once AVID students began to be admitted to four-year universities—with financial support—the whole school turned around. Now all Ramona students are encouraged to join the college-bound.

Involvement in School-Level Decision-Making

AVID programs at the eight schools have varying degrees of access to and influence upon school decision-making. All enjoy good administrative support, but the extent to which AVID is involved in decision making depends on the school. At Southwest, because of the extensive reforms underway that draw heavily upon AVID methods and philosophy, the program is having an effect on the school's direction. At Fallbrook, the AVID coordinator represents the AVID/AVID-Plus Academy as a Team Leader by virtue of the program's departmental status; therefore, she is part of the school leadership team. Colton AVID is also seeking departmental status and expects to achieve it in 2002.

In other ways, AVID can have an impact on schoolwide decisions through its status as a research-based, successful program. For example, in the case of the program that was positioned to compete for AVID students and resources, the AVID coordinator held firm and the new program was eventually dropped.

Schoolwide Reform and Use of Data

All principals in the eight Best Practices schools understand that to "AVID-ize" a school does not mean that every student is enrolled AVID, but that AVID methods and philosophy, including the use of program data, can be used as a lever for wider change. Perhaps the most extensive adoption of AVID ideas for schoolwide reform is occurring at Southwest, where the principal and school site council identified AVID's approach to writing across the curriculum as the vehicle for transforming the paradigm for the faculty. Each teacher, from history to physics, is now expected to teach writing through content. Intensive professional development and use of student data are major components of the reform. Every six weeks, teachers are expected to review and reflect on student progress data and assess how they might need to adjust their own teaching.

At Colton, the principal plans to inaugurate an on-campus AVID self-study institute for teachers in which a small group of volunteer teachers will adopt AVID strategies (Cornell Notes, binders, parent involvement, grade checks) and then study the effects on students in a sample of their classes.

Transforming the School and Student Culture

The eight successful AVID programs have a ripple effect on the school and student culture within their respective schools. Success breeds more success, and AVID's visible, data-driven success has helped foster a culture of academic excellence, high expectations, and going-to-college within the schools. The culture of the AVID classroom is the scaffolding upon which students develop life-long habits of mind, such as responsibility, accountability, discipline, collaboration, continuous inquiry, and determination. The school's college-going rates grow not just because of AVID students, but because other students in the school have come to see college in their future as well. AVID students' friends and classmates come to rely on them to keep up-to-date about requirements and deadlines for college applications.

AVID teachers' belief in their students' potential is infectious. Not only the AVID students, but the other teachers and students in the school sense the total commitment of the AVID teachers to see their students realize their dreams of going to college. The effect AVID has on the attitudes and beliefs of others in the school is done more by example than by deliberate persuasion.

Non-traditional students now see college as a viable option. More enroll in AP because they've seen their AVID classmates successfully complete rigorous courses; and the prospect of entering college, completely remote only a few years ago, is now part of the school culture and within reach of many more students.

Part TWO: THE MAGNIFICENT EIGHT

Central Union High School

El Centro, California

"The key to AVID success? Martha Hoopes. You can have a good team, but if you don't have a good leader, that team isn't going to be able to play the game. She is the team leader, the driving force of that program."

—Emma Jones, Principal

Located in El Centro, in the Imperial Valley and on the border with Mexico, Central Union High School enrolls more than 1600 students, over 80% of them Hispanic. Unemployment in the area is high, and over half of the students are eligible for the free/reduced price lunch program. There is no strong college-going culture, and fewer than 20% of graduates meet the University of California entrance requirements; nursing and legal/law enforcement careers are the choice for about one-fourth of the graduates.

Central Union High School has traditionally been a low-performing school, but in recent years, test scores and college-going rates are up, thanks in large measure to the AVID program. About 70% stay in the Imperial Valley and attend community college; very few opt for four-year colleges. In 2000, for example, only 50 students met the University of California a-g requirements, and 37 of them were in AVID. Even fewer completed the requirements a year later, but 90% of them were AVID students.

For the past three years, Central Union has raised its SAT-9 scores and met the Academic Performance Index goal each time, which has meant financial rewards for the school and students. The school site council received a large cash award, and 111 students each qualified for a $1000 scholarship—ten were in the top 5% in the state. One of those was a junior AVID student, who also tied for first in the junior class, making her co-valedictorian. As one teacher put it, AVID is a "pocket of excellence" in the school.

Program History

When the AVID program at Central Union started up 10 years ago, the teachers in many ways were operating on trust. Some of the team hadn't attended the AVID training, and the school didn't have the AVID materials, but they had the support and guidance from the San Diego County Office. Because the school was on a year-round calendar at the time, they began with four sections, one per track. In a few years, four sections had grown to 11 and more than 300 students were in AVID. When a new high school opened, about half the students transferred there and the number of AVID sections dropped to seven.

The AVID teachers believe that AVID has flourished at Central Union for several reasons. One is the stability the program has enjoyed. A nucleus of teachers has been

with the AVID program since it began in 1991-92, and Martha Hoopes has been the program's only coordinator. Bob Macholtz is still with the program nearly 10 years later; and a third teacher is still involved, but as the Title VII resource teacher. The program has also enjoyed continued administrative support. Both school administrators since AVID began understood and supported AVID. The first principal secured an extra prep period for the coordinator, and it is approved each year by the school site team council. Bob also pointed to the strong leadership that Martha has provided. "She is really dedicated," he says, "and takes care of all the details so that AVID teachers and students are well-informed." In addition, all of the AVID teachers want to be in AVID; no one was assigned to the position. Finally, because AVID promotes family involvement, it is a good match for the relatively small and family-oriented Imperial Valley community.

There are currently eight sections of AVID, enrolling over 200 students, about 13% of the school population. The five AVID teachers represent a cross-section of disciplines. Of the two veterans, Martha Hoopes, the program's coordinator since its inception, is an English teacher, and Bob Macholtz teaches in the math department. Rene Agundez, an English teacher who grew up in the Valley and graduated from Central Union High, joined the team about seven years ago; then Patrick Gratten, who teaches English Language Development, a couple of years after that. The newest member of the team, Alejandro Lopez, is in the history department and also is a graduate of the school. Of the five AVID teachers, Martha, Bob, and Rene have two sections of AVID each; Patrick and Alejandro teach one.

The AVID team has included one math teacher, Bob Macholtz, from the beginning. If possible, Martha says, they would like to add more math teachers because that's where students' needs are greatest. As in other AVID programs, tutorials are heavily concentrated on math. The five tutors spend the majority of their time on math, and in Bob's class, he helps out as well. Having him on the team has made a big difference according to Martha. Moreover, she believes having representation from several disciplines is valuable because then it doesn't look like an English program.

AVID at Central Union prefers teachers to take a group of students through their four years, building a sense of family along the way. Because of scheduling, that is not always possible, but most years they at least manage to maintain a critical mass of students who have been with the teacher who has the AVID senior seminar. They do not consider mixing juniors and seniors a problem. "It's wonderful," one of the teachers observed, "The juniors get a jumpstart on everything because they all get practice with the applications and personal statements." With seniors, Central Union follows the AVID senior seminar curriculum, and students focus entirely on entrance to college. As Martha points out, "They don't write an essay that's not related to college entrance."

Tutors

Central Union employs eight tutors who distribute themselves so that AVID classes have two or three tutors each. Math skills are a high priority, and applicants must be enrolled in college full time to set an example for the AVID students; most attend

Imperial Valley College or the branch of San Diego State University in Calexico. All tutors must complete the AVID training and many, but not all, are former AVID students. According to Martha's records, they seldom transfer to a four-year college "over the hill," but two did leave for UC San Diego in 2001. The current group of tutors have each been tutoring for at least two years. Central Union does not need to use high school seniors as tutors.

Recruiting Students

Recruitment is a high priority at Central. In Martha's view, it is "key—absolutely essential." In the first cohort of seniors, she recalled, only two students were accepted to four-year college. The AVID team concluded they had not selected the right students, and made adjustments accordingly. Their reasoning was that if the seniors could not win acceptance to universities, then the younger students would be less willing to work hard. "It's hard for the freshmen and sophomores to hang on if they don't see the goals being met. Now we can show them, and they see that students are going to college."

The Central Union team believes the recruitment procedures recommended by AVID have definitely worked—with a few refinements. Each spring, the teachers and a group of AVID students visit the feeder schools where they make a presentation and provide interested 8th graders with a nice folder of information on AVID. Every year, the number of interested students grows because the word has spread in the middle school that AVID is "cool." A month later, the prospective candidates are interviewed individually and provided specific information on AVID requirements and expectations—from the notebook commitment and a list of a-g courses to the requirement for summer school. Those who don't follow through aren't selected. Among those who enter AVID, there are always a few who don't want to do the work and later opt out. There is a simultaneous recruitment among the freshmen in the high school, but for the most part, students are not admitted to AVID after their freshman year, and never as a senior.

A week before the first term ends, ninth grade core teachers are asked to recommend candidates for AVID, and many respond. At this stage, the staff follow the AVID guidelines for recruitment, except that they do not accept students with a GPA below 2.3. Their rationale is that college admissions standards have increased and scores below that simply are not competitive. Exceptions are made, of course. "If the student is just outstanding and highly recommended," Martha explained, "then we might reconsider, but mainly we concentrate on students in the middle." In addition, there is a paper screening by the counselors for attendance and discipline. Test scores, primarily math, are also considered, with an eye toward the 50th percentile. They are more forgiving with English scores because so many of the students are English language learners. "I taught ESL for four years," Martha said, "and I know they can do it."

Students whose GPA dips to 2.3 or below are placed on probation. The AVID teacher first sends a letter and then talks to the parents to make sure they understand that unless the student's grades improve, he or she will be dropped from the program. Later,

if grades come back up, the student can rejoin AVID. Martha talks to the student and then informs the counselor who then handles the schedule changes.

Multidisciplinary Site Team

As much as any other school in the study, Central Union takes seriously the role of the AVID site team. The five AVID teachers, representing various departments, the principal, counselors, and several teachers meet bi-weekly at 7 a.m. to discuss the recruitment, testing, and other issues. The team involves more than just the core teachers, but they are the nucleus that makes the process work. The principal acknowledges that she lends her support, but insists that Martha is the driving force behind the program.

AVID Curriculum

Because Central Union started AVID without the AVID curriculum, much of what they do is home-grown. They didn't receive the formal AVID curriculum materials until a couple of years into the program, and for the veterans, some of the activities were already set. They do several of the AVID curriculum units, but much they have developed on their own. One or more of the teachers does a newspaper unit; a John Covey book is used in another; and the Museum of Tolerance is the centerpiece for a third. To both motivate and inform his students, Rene asks them to investigate a particular university and create a poster that depicts various facts about the college and why they want to go there.

As the only math teacher on the team, Bob admits that teaching writing has been a challenge, but he thinks the advantage of having math represented on the AVID team far outweighs any limitations he may have as a writing teacher. Advanced math is the gatekeeper for college and a key element of the a-g requirements, he points out. Although he does not always have AVID students in his advanced math classes, he is there to help with everything from SAT prep to the more challenging courses. He estimates that a high percentage of AVID students enroll in pre-calculus and other advanced courses.

Last year, Central Union's junior AVID students participated in a SAT preparation program sponsored by San Diego State University and managed by the County Office of Education. The program provided a stipend for the teacher and covered the cost of scoring practice SATs. In addition, each student received a Barron's SAT preparation book at no cost. Since the junior curriculum in AVID includes SAT preparation in the second semester, the school saw the program as a great opportunity. Students worked on SAT questions for class credit each Tuesday and Thursday until they took the test in the spring at Imperial Valley College. Teachers are confident that after the intensive review, the juniors will be much better prepared when the take the SAT in the fall.

In AVID, students are required to apply to four-year universities "over the hill," but in reality, many end up at the local community college—often because their parents are reluctant to let them leave home. AVID discourages students from working—school

should be their only job, but a few still hold down part-time jobs. The counseling department supports AVID in several ways, both directly and indirectly. The counselors do presentations to the entire ninth grade on graduation and college entrance requirements, including the UC a-g requirements, for example. The counselors have also attended the AVID Summer Institute as well as other counselor workshops, including some in other states to stay informed and motivated about getting students into college. "I felt pumped and wanted to make a difference [after the workshops]," recalled one counselor. Senior AVID students get assistance with college applications and requests for financial aid from the AVID teachers, and from the counselors they get special counseling on independent colleges and letters of recommendation.

Schoolwide Effects of AVID

Principal Emma Jones is a strong supporter of AVID and explained how AVID is integral to the school's core activities: the mission statement, site plan, WASC program, and the underperforming school plan. As she explained, "All these are being incorporated into one plan now, and the strong emphasis on literacy and math goes hand in hand with our action plan. What AVID does with their students, such as using the tutors, meshes perfectly." There is no specific budget for AVID from the district, but the school site council allocates about $32,000 each year to support the AVID tutors, an extra prep period for the AVID coordinator, and other program needs.

Comprehensive planning is seen in the spread of AVID methodologies throughout the school. Indeed, the entire faculty is well represented at the AVID Summer Institute each year; 13 went in the summer of 2001. "We send as many as we can fund," the principal explained, " and a Title VII grant helps. All teachers are asked to support the use of Cornell Notes and all students do community service projects. The principal believes there is about 95% compliance with the Cornell Notes request. Through the support of the Title VII grant, ESL teachers have been trained in AVID strategies and employ AVID-trained tutors in their classrooms. The Legal Services/Law Enforcement Academy has also adopted the AVID tutoring strategy, and using state academic performance reward money, the school plans to fund AVID tutors for regular math classes. Four tutors will circulate among all 10 math teachers' classes, so that students can work in small groups for at least part of each week.

Student Outcomes

Many of the AVID students take AP Spanish language and literature. Central Union offers AP courses in biology, chemistry, physics (every other year), calculus, and English. Courses are open for students who are getting As and Bs and willing to do the work, and AVID students are encouraged to enroll. As the table below shows, in the 2001-02 school year, 20 percent of the students enrolled in AP courses were from AVID, and 38% of those in AP English were AVID students, a reflection of AVID's emphasis on writing and literacy. Four AVID students were enrolled in the senior GATE English course.

In 2001, 21 of the 28 seniors in AVID were accepted to a four-year college; 10 were accepted to three or more, including UC Riverside, UC Irvine, UC San Diego, and Brigham Young University. Of the 28 AVID seniors that year, nineteen enrolled in a four-year university, and eight, a community college.

Central Union AVID Enrollment in Advanced Placement Courses: 2001-02

AP Course	Total	AVID	% AVID
Biology	13	1	7.7%
Calculus	15	1	6.7%
Chemistry	8	0	0.0%
English	37	14	37.8%
Spanish Language	46	7	15.2%
Spanish Literature	27	8	29.6%
US History	40	6	15.0%
Total	186	37	19.9%

Coachella Valley High School

Thermal, California

"I moved my coaching into the classroom, and called it academic coaching. I not only survived, but the kids were successful. As coordinator, I try to nurture them, emotionally."

—Midge Rodier, AVID Site Coordinator

The student population of Coachella Valley High School is about 98 percent Latino, the sons and daughters of immigrant workers who maintain the kitchens and lawns of the Palm Springs area resorts. Poverty, limited English proficiency among students, and overcrowding are three of the challenges facing the school. Since family incomes in the area average about $12,000, most students are eligible for the free/reduced price lunch, and the school qualifies as a Title I schoolwide program. Historically, the challenge for Coachella Valley High School has been to help its large population of English language learners progress so they can be successful in required courses in English. With more than 3000 students already in a facility planned for 1500, the number of students continues to grow. Nearly 1200 freshmen enrolled in 2001.

Within this context, the AVID program faces some of the most daunting conditions in the state. Yet, with a clear vision, dedicated personnel, and hard work the AVID team has managed to build a strong program that makes a difference for students.

Program History

The AVID coordinator, Midge Rodier, taught physical education, first at the middle school, and then at Coachella High School, before taking on AVID. At that point, she had already begun to branch out, running a school-to-career program called Career Prep for ninth graders, when the principal sent her to an AVID demonstration awareness visit in San Diego. She was "hooked." Back at Coachella, she immediately began interviewing prospective AVID students and opened one section of AVID in 1994. She led the first class of freshmen through their senior year, adding a new section—and teachers—each year along the way. By the third year, there were five sections and three teachers, and Midge was named AVID coordinator.

As a PE teacher, Midge had some doubts at the beginning about how she could help students with writing and other more academic needs. The first term she had no tutors and found herself trying to break into tutorial groups and provide help in math. "The self-doubt was overwhelming," she said. "I said to myself, I'm not the person to do this; I don't know how to do this. I'm not a writing teacher, how can I help the kids?" But she and the other AVID teachers sat down with the AVID libraries and walked through the curriculum together. They did that for three months. "I finally realized I was a coach—I was a gymnastics coach for years—and started doing the things I did with athletic teams. I moved my coaching into classroom, and called it academic coaching. I not only survived, but the kids were successful."

Recruiting Teachers and Students

That AVID teachers and students must volunteer for AVID was brought home to Midge this summer when the two teachers she had recruited to teach 9th grade AVID failed to show up at the AVID Summer Institute. The message was clear, and Midge made no attempt to cajole them into reconsidering. She looked for other ways to cover the classes. The existing AVID teachers combined some of their classes, and Midge concentrated on finding other teachers who really wanted to become involved with AVID. Midge would like to expand from six to eight sections, two at each grade level, but that would require that she recruit even more teachers. The AVID teachers feel that with the current set-up, communication is strong; adding another person might make it more difficult for them to stay connected. The team consists of Midge Rodier, the coordinator, who teaches two sections of AVID and two sections of Career Prep; Sia Lux, who teaches advanced math, Richard Razo, who teaches advanced English, and Rob Diaz, Economics. Aside from Midge, each teacher has one section of AVID.

Coachella AVID recruits students according to the AVID guidelines, identifying students whose GPA is in the middle range academically. Other important recruitment factors include whether students will be the first generation in their family to attend college and their eligibility for free/reduced price lunch program. If they meet those three criteria, then the interview becomes the deciding factor. Midge creates a spreadsheet that marks whether the application is complete, eligibility for the free/reduced price lunch program, if they are first generation college, reading and math scores, and if they were interviewed. Mining middle school AVID for students has not yet proved fruitful. Only one of the feeder schools has AVID, and its program is still in its infancy. Midge is afraid the teachers there are involved in AVID for the wrong reasons. "They put money into field trips; I put mine into tutors because they're what makes AVID work," she said.

Recruitment has not always gone smoothly, and Midge has learned some lessons along the way. In 2000, she was unable to meet with the parents before the final selection because the new assistant principal asked for the list of students before the parent interview. As a result, some of the students weren't as committed as they should be. The next year, therefore, she interviewed students and met with parents much earlier. Students whose parents failed to show up at the parent meeting were not accepted. By August 15, the 60 slots were filled. Some parents who didn't attend tried to get their children accepted anyway, but Midge held firm.

Midge believes that when she and two other teachers began the program, they let the standard for admission slip too low, and many students weren't able to handle the rigorous curriculum. Since that time, they have tried to follow AVID's GPA requirements more closely. For the next three years, the program tried to stick to the GPA range of 2.0-3.0. Now they have raised the upper limit to 3.5—partly because of the apparent grade inflation at a feeder school. "Do I reject a student with a 3.6 GPA who reads at the 5th grade level?" she asked. For example, English language learners (ELL) who are succeeding and on-track in math and science may be admitted as long as

their reading is above the 5th grade level. "If they're weak in their first language reading and math, then that's a problem," Midge cautioned, " but most ELL students master it quickly." The program still admits a few each year—5 to 10 out of 60—who need remediation in summer school and are placed in a specialized reading program.

The vice principal thinks AVID at Coachella is focusing on high achievers, but Midge disagrees. She admitted that she did recruit 8-10 students with fairly high GPAs, but pointed out that most of the parents did not attend college, and that family income is very low. While some teachers and administrators may think AVID creams off the better students, Midge counters that they learn to be that way in AVID—to take notes, sit at the front of the class, and do their homework.

Teacher-Student Continuity

At Coachella, AVID teachers prefer to stay with the same group of students for the entire four years of high school. Because of the master schedule, they aren't always able to do that and have to combine some grade levels. They make a special effort not to mix juniors in with seniors, however. With all the time required for seniors' college and financial aid applications, juniors sometimes don't get the attention they need if the two grades share the same AVID class.

Midge takes the lead with seniors. To meet their needs, she has schooled herself on the details of college applications—including the personal statement and financial aid. Even for filling out the UC application, she says, she devotes at least three class periods, whereas the college representatives do it in one. Midge reviews the application using a highlighter and checks with parents for certain details. "There's no one on campus who can help with the applications, personal statements, or FAFSA—the counselors are overworked. Without knowledgeable parents, students won't meet the deadlines and won't go to college unless they are in AVID."

Another AVID teacher, Rob Diaz, is training for the junior and senior seminar, but the other teachers realize that, for the time being, Midge is a valuable resource on senior issues, and she makes it clear that they can ask for help anytime. With Sia's seniors in 2001, for instance, Midge handled the application process because of her additional experience and expertise. They do not want Midge to specialize in seniors, however, because having one AVID teacher for three years and then another for the final year would be a problem. When Midge taught the seniors in 2000, all but four of them had been with her the entire four years.

AVID Curriculum

Midge said she had heard other teachers outside the school complain that AVID is too "rigid." Although she admits that it is structured, the bottom line, she argues, is that it teaches students time management, an effective way of taking notes, how to form study groups, and to have a voice and speak up. When students go to college, they can't be passive, she counters, but need to be able to approach professors. The strength of the

AVID program lies in putting writing as the foundation and providing students access to trained college tutors who guide students toward critical thinking.

Site Team

The AVID site team plays a critical role at Coachella as well. Once AVID enrolled its first cohort of students, the teachers began thinking of ways to convince other teachers of advanced courses to accept the students so that the program could continue to grow. They started by training the Honors teachers—English Honors, World History Honors—through the AVID Summer Institute. As teachers were trained, they became members of the AVID site team. About 25-30 teachers and administrators have been trained—too many to meet with regularly, so now a smaller group meets. Without the site team, Midge remarked, the program becomes identified with only one person: "They had a good AVID program, but she left." The AVID coordinator needs to be able to work well with all teachers on staff as a professional colleague. The AVID site team is also a means to ensure good public relations within the school.

Tutors

Tutors are a strength of the Coachella AVID program, and only recently have the AVID coordinators had difficulty in recruiting. Because there is no university nearby Coachella, the AVID teachers find out which seniors plan to attend the local community college and then recruit and train them to be future tutors. Isolation is an issue, because the College of Desert is the only institution of higher education in the area, and it is fairly distant. The program lost one tutor last year, because she resigned to concentrate on transferring to mortician's school, and then two college tutors quit soon after the beginning of the 2001-02 school year, leaving AVID with only four, even though the pay was increased from $6.50 to $8 an hour. As a result, Coachella has begun to allow more seniors to be tutors. Three seniors have been trained to make up for the tutor shortage, and there are now sometimes six tutors per class. The seniors appear to be doing quite well, and according to Midge, they are "really solid." At Coachella, the coordinator deals with only the "head tutor," who has the responsibility of coordinating with the other tutors. Even so, all the tutors have Midge's telephone number and may call her in an emergency.

Advanced Placement

Coachella offered eleven Advanced Placement courses in 2001-02, including English, biology, calculus, statistics, history, economics, and government. Although the school has continued to restrict enrollment in the courses, based on grades and other criteria, the number of AVID students in AP is on the rise. Beginning in 2001-02, all AVID students are required to enroll in either Honors or AP English. Two AVID teachers also teach AP—Sia Lux teaches AP calculus and AP statistics, and Richard Razo teaches AP/Honors English. He also teaches English at the College of the Desert and thus knows what is required of college freshmen. After the first grading period, some of the AVID

students had Ds and Fs in his course, but they all agreed that taking the more rigorous courses was the right decision.

Schoolwide Impact

In the principal's view, AVID has affected all the school's departments in some way, particularly through the AVID Summer Institute (ASI). He recalled that a few years ago, when the English department was struggling, looking for cohesion, the ASI workshops helped them gain focus. In addition, AVID instructional techniques and strategies, and not just the Cornell Notes, are infused into many of the classes. Moreover, because teachers throughout the school are aware of and support AVID, Midge has no difficulty scheduling students into particular courses.

As part of a new Title VII grant that Coachella was recently awarded, Midge has been asked to develop and coordinate an AVID-like program for the school's large limited-English proficient population. To be implemented in 2002-03, the program will include a tutorial two days a week and use AVID's College Success Path materials, which are already being used in the school's two academies, a Teacher Academy and a Fine Arts Academy. Coachella is in the process of hiring 10 tutors and, in order to maintain the tutor pool, increased their hourly rate. Advanced seniors may be recruited as well. Midge will likely take on the coordinator role, but is reluctant to drop her other classes. As written in the proposal, the coordinator position will take up three periods per day, and that would mean she has to drop either one AVID class or one of the career prep Pathways classes.

Student Outcomes

For 2001-02, Coachella enrolled 41 seniors and, by the end of the first term, several already had early acceptances from a few colleges. However, since these colleges weren't the first choices for some of the students, they were holding out for letters from Stanford, Berkeley, UCLA, Laverne, or Loma Linda University.

Coachella High School's college-going rate is only about 16%; in 2001, of almost 500 seniors, fewer than 70 entered college. Of these, 24 were from AVID—more than one-third. Of the AVID students, seven (29%) attended UC Riverside or UC Davis, four enrolled at a CSU campus, and two attended the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Several enrolled in the College of the Desert.

Three AVID students received Gates scholarships in 2000, out of a total of four in the school, and one of these also won the AVID Regional Center $1000 writing contest. Coachella was particularly proud of that, given the competition from a number of strong AVID programs in Riverside County. In 2001-02, the school had one Gates scholar, and he was an AVID student.

AVID students were well-represented in Advanced Placement courses, as shown in the following table. In 2001-02, AVID students accounted for over 30 percent of the

students in AP, even though they represent only six percent of the total student population. More than half of the students in Advanced Placement US Government course, and nearly half of the AP English were AVID students, no doubt due in part to the new policy requiring AVID students to enroll in Honors or AP English.

Coachella AVID Enrollment in Advanced Placement Courses: 2001-02

AP Course	Total	AVID	% AVID
Art	9	4	44.4%
Biology	22	7	31.8%
Calculus	43	15	34.9%
Statistics	23	6	26.1%
English	26	12	46.2%
Spanish Language	134	37	27.6%
Spanish Literature	34	4	11.8%
US Government	26	16	61.5%
US History	26	6	23.1%
Total	334	103	30.8%

Colton High School

Colton, California

"We channel AVID students into the best classes. So if you have AVID students in your class, you're a good teacher. If you don't, then you should get worried."

—Jerry Armendariz, Principal

More than 100 years old, Colton High School is the heart of the Colton community and the venue for a variety of athletic and community events. The school's academic reputation, however, has suffered in recent years because of poor test scores, and a WASC review two years ago came down hard on the school's instructional programs. AVID was one of the few bright spots in the review. The new principal, a former AVID teacher at the school, is taking a pro-active approach to the problems and has started on the ground level—literally—upgrading the facilities and adding grass and fountains on the grounds. He has also begun a concerted effort to improve instruction at the school, with a heavy emphasis on AVID methods.

Program History

AVID was started at Colton in 1991 by Vivian Shaw, currently an AVID Regional Coordinator for Region 10 located in the nearby San Bernardino County Office of Education. At that point, the school was reacting to another critical WASC review, and AVID seemed to be at least a part of the solution. She started with one section and then added one or two sections each year for three years. After six years, however, Vivian moved to Illinois, and another teacher was assigned to AVID. AVID was not her choice, and making her AVID coordinator turned out to be a mistake. She left AVID after a year, and the program was again in need of a leader. Eileen Potterton, chair of the ESL department and a good friend of Vivian's, volunteered for the position in 1998-99. Among the first groups of teachers to be trained at the AVID Summer Institute, Eileen proved to be a good choice and effectively rebuilt the program within a few years. Inheriting AVID was a challenge, though; the number of students in AVID had fallen, and several key procedures were no longer followed, but with Vivian's help, Eileen was able to pull it back together.

As Eileen observed, "AVID says that in order to be a good AVID teacher, you have to *want* to do it, and [the other teacher] is a perfect example. She got forced into it, and it didn't work out." Moreover, Eileen pointed out, there is a large political component to the AVID coordinator's position. "It's more difficult for those who are junior or without the political savvy, and not well connected on campus. That was the other teacher's problem; she didn't know who to go to, and they were able to run her around." Vivian, on the other hand, was dynamic, she said, which made it difficult for her replacement because the students were resistant. Even after a year, the AVID seniors were still loyal to Vivian. Similarly, in Eileen's first year, a second AVID teacher who did not choose to be in AVID also did not work out. "You can't assign this position," says Eileen, "They didn't have the right math, English, and writing background, and they didn't want to do it."

When Eileen assumed the reins of AVID, there were seven sections but the program graduated only a few seniors. In her four-year tenure, the number of sections has grown to 11, and the senior class has consistently enrolled more than 30 students. Eileen now teaches two senior and two sophomore sections, and the program added two new AVID teachers. John Kitchen, a social science teacher, joined the AVID team in 2000. A graduate of Colton High School, John substituted for Vivian Shaw several times while she was AVID coordinator. Once he joined the faculty, he volunteered for AVID because of its fit with the socio-economics of the area. He teaches three freshman and two junior sections of AVID. Darcy Salvador, an English teacher and the newest member of the team, teaches one section each of freshman and sophomores. She believes the Colton AVID program is successful because they have a clear vision and follow through with the students. "If students make it to their senior year, they go on to university," she says.

AVID at Colton is well-funded, enjoys strong district support, and expects to be granted departmental status at the high school. Eileen is provided an extra prep period to administer the program, and has her own budget for senior scholarships, the junior road trip, and certain incidentals. The district kicks in $40,000 a year for tutors.

Program Expansion

The principal wants to expand the program, even though it currently operates 11 sections with 260 students—about nine percent of the school population. Eileen is already finding it difficult to coordinate everything. Yet she agrees, because she believes many more students could benefit from the program. "I feel like the more kids that are exposed to AVID, the better," she says. The need is great in the community because there are so few families with college educated parents. She also believes the program should recruit more English Learners, given the school population.

If the program expands, the AVID teachers would like to add a math teacher to the team to complement the two English teachers and one social studies teacher. In fact, Eileen has already identified two math teachers who may be interested. The only problem will be to convince the math department to release them to teach a period of AVID. Nevertheless, Eileen is hopeful and intends to pursue it. "One of the nice things about having a demonstration program and a program that works is that they tend to give you what you want," she says. "They can see that it's being successful and actually paying dividends."

Colton divides AVID classes by grade level, but doesn't expect students to stay with the same teacher for four years. The senior year is intensely oriented toward college applications, admissions and financial aid, and the junior year of AVID focuses on college placement tests and writing. Eileen oversees the application process for all the students, and to keep abreast of the latest trends in university admissions, Eileen routinely attends workshops on admissions counseling and financial aid. For juniors and seniors, Colton relaxed requirements for notetaking to two times a week, one page of notes per

class. "But they have to be perfect," says Eileen. When Eileen assumed leadership of the program, she tried combining 9th and 10th grades, but found that with different teachers, it was hard to coordinate lessons to avoid duplicating the writing assignments. "With one teacher you could flip-flop the writing assignments," she says, "but we found it hard to do." With the grade levels kept separate, and because the program is so large, Eileen believes the AVID family feeling may not be as strong in their program as it might be, but that the sense of family is strong within each AVID class.

AVID Essentials

Eileen ranked the essentials of AVID as secure funding, good tutors, dedicated teachers, a student willingness to work, and parent involvement. In her view, an effective AVID program must have AVID students who are willing to work to get what they want, a teacher who is willing to help them do it, parents who are behind the teachers and students, and trained tutors provided by the funding. As AVID teacher, Eileen says, you have to be willing to share control of the class three days a week when you're not the teacher—the tutors are.

Darcy stressed the importance of two critical components of AVID. First, she says, you need teachers and an administration with the vision, who understand what AVID is—and that it's not about remediation. Second, you have to have enough funding for trained, reliable, high-quality tutors. "Tutors are the cornerstone of an effective AVID program," she says, "because they provide the connection between the AVID student, the AVID teacher and the university. They offer much more than just tutoring in terms of motivating the students. If these two aren't in place, then it all falls down."

Support from the AVID Regional Center is also important. AVID teachers from Colton religiously attend the coordinator workshops put on by RIMS. Eileen attends all the meetings, and John and Darcy alternate. Eileen praised the workshops for the variety of useful information they provide, pointing in particular to a session on the ABCs of college counseling she attended.

Recruitment and Retention

AVID at Colton is reluctant to accept students who are unable to meet the rigor of the classes; on the other hand, they don't want to reject them too quickly, either. As a safeguard, AVID considers students' test scores, in addition to GPA, and if they are high enough, an invitation may still be extended. In general, however, students with a GPA less than 2.5 in junior high school have not been found to be good candidates for the program.

A current concern among the AVID teachers is the retention rate between 9th and 10th grade. Freshmen AVID students, especially boys, are dropping out when they see how much work there is and realize they have to give up their elective for four years. In middle school, Eileen pointed out, the tutorials are sometimes much less demanding. Students come with a single question, and once it is answered they can do their

homework. At Colton, of course, things are different, and tutors run the groups by the book. As a possible solution to the retention problem, Eileen plans to ask tutors to make up "responsibility sheets" that will allow AVID to keep closer tabs on students in each of their classes. "If we know who's in trouble in what class, AVID can follow up," explained Eileen. Last year, a similar approach was tried successfully through lunch time tutoring.

A second concern is parent participation. Eileen remembers that when Vivian was coordinator, and had a smaller program, she knew each of the parents intimately. "With 260 students, though, you can't do that—it's a cost of growth," Eileen says. Nevertheless, the AVID team is looking for ways to get more parents involved.

Communication is strong among the three teachers. They share the same prep period and frequently meet during that time. "The common prep really helps," says Darcy, "It's particularly important when teachers only teach one period of AVID and four in their subject area, like me." Their rooms are also in close proximity, which helps not only for communication, but for shuttling tutors from one classroom to another.

Tutors

Colton AVID requires that all the tutors be certified, and the free tutor training AVID Regional Center provides is thus a real bonus to the school. Colton generally has had good luck finding reliable tutors. One effective strategy has been to recruit from both the current AVID students and the broader graduating class at Colton. The AVID teachers find out who among the top 5% of the graduating class is staying in the area and enlist them as tutors for the coming year. UC Riverside has evolved into a great resource for tutors as well, even though the campus is more than half an hour away.

Because the three teachers sometimes teach AVID during the same period, the program might need as many as 12 tutors at one time. In addition, the program faced a mini-crisis this year because seven of their tutors were graduating from college and resigned from AVID to focus on their own college work. A program at CSU San Bernardino, however, will provide three additional tutors to the program this year—free. Eileen heard about the program and then cultivated the relationship with the program staff and managed to secure a promise of three tutors.

Schoolwide Effects

As a result of the recent WASC review, Colton is in the process of re-training staff, and AVID is playing a role. The WASC team criticized the school overall, and in essence, said that all the teachers should be doing the things that AVID does. AVID definitely has a presence on campus, especially since the program became a National Demonstration School, but thus far, there has been little in the way of formal training of other teachers aside from the AVID Summer Institute. Some teachers recognize the AVID students and have them tell others how to take notes or keep their binders, and one math teacher taught all his students how to take Cornell Notes. There is administrative

support for spreading AVID methodologies, and Eileen and the other AVID teachers are hoping to initiate more schoolwide efforts.

The principal, Jerry Armendariz, described some initial efforts they are taking to AVID-ize the school. He and Eileen, along with several other teachers and a counselor, went in the spring to a Region 10 retreat at Lake Arrowhead to plan for next year. Among the planned innovations is an on-campus AVID institute for teachers that will involve self-study. One idea is for a small group of volunteer teachers to adopt AVID strategies (Cornell Notes, binders, parent involvement, grade checks) and then study the effects on students in a sample of their classes.

Another idea is to strengthen the AVID site team by involving more faculty. Though AVID does have good relations with and support from the other teachers and administrators, Colton's is a "site team" in name only, since the AVID program planning is managed by the AVID teachers. Many teachers are already involved through the periodic progress reports to the AVID teachers, which occupies a prominent place in Colton's program. Eileen recalled how (before she became the AVID coordinator) she immediately saw the effect on AVID students in her English classes when Vivian initiated the reports. "The last thing they wanted," she recalled, "was for the AVID coordinator to get a bad report from a teacher."

Student Outcomes

Colton graduated 36 AVID seniors in 2001; of these, 34 were accepted to four-year universities, such as Princeton and UCLA. Six enrolled in UC Riverside, seven in CSU San Bernardino, and five in CSU Long Beach. Students also selected UCLA, UC Davis, and Cal Poly Pomona. At the regional senior recognition banquet, programs with a strong reputation were represented by only a few students who were admitted to a couple of colleges, while the entire Colton AVID senior class attended, and many of them were admitted to several colleges. Eileen recalled how the superintendent announced at the graduation ceremony that 87 students were accepted to 4 year colleges. "Thirty-five of them were from AVID! Wow! I didn't think I was doing that much," she said. Moreover, she added, most of the AVID students were accepted to 5-7 colleges each.

AVID has also had an impact on Advanced Placement. AVID students are well-represented in the school's honors and AP courses, especially Honors English, AP Spanish, and AP Economics. Between 1998, when Eileen became AVID coordinator, and 2001, the number of AVID students taking AP exams grew from just five to over 30. AVID students are now required to take at least one AP course, and with each cohort of students, the number in AP and Honors increases. As Eileen put it, when she took over AVID, the challenge was to get students to take Cornell Notes and keep their binders, but she has deliberately raised the bar each year to keep pace with the increase in college entrance standards. Since Vivian inaugurated AVID 10 years ago, the number of Colton students taking the SAT has more than doubled from 76 in 1992 to 178 in 2000.

Fallbrook High School

Fallbrook, California

"The way to succeed with students and get them into college is to make it a self-fulfilling prophesy: Say, 'you will go to college' and they will do it. The school culture has been AVID-ized."

—Principal Mark Steffler

Fallbrook is a village of 22,000, but the school enrolls students from an area of 500 square miles. Because there is no city government in Fallbrook, the high school is the center of many community activities and the source of much civic pride. The sports and well-known drama and music programs attract large audiences, and the school's new performing arts center also serves as a community facility where the Fallbrook Music Society and Fallbrook Players drama group perform.

The was school organized into career academies in 1997-98. These include the A-Star Academy, an agricultural research academy that is a showcase program in the state; AVID/AVID-Plus; the Health and Human Services Academy; and the CHART (communication in humanities and art) Academy.

Program History

Barbara Kalisuch had been an English teacher at Fallbrook High School for four years and was seriously considering leaving education, when the department chair said there was a program she wanted her to look into—AVID. She soon signed on as coordinator with one section, and added a third section and a second AVID teacher two years later. For the past several years, the program has operated with six sections and three teachers. Mary Begley, another English/ESL teacher, is in her fourth year with the program, and Marco Arias, a social studies teacher, is in his third. With her classroom next door to Barbara's, Mary quickly learned of AVID's reputation. When offered the opportunity to take over an AVID section, she was eager to give it a try. Marco's story is somewhat different.

Marco's wife was an AVID tutor and recommended the program to him. He tried it out and was convinced that he really want to be a teacher. The thing he liked about AVID, he said, was that the students were motivated—not always highest ranking in school, but motivated. In fact, his original plan was to become a policeman. When applying for the police academy, he gave his reason as wanting to work with kids. The examiner told him that the police doesn't save kids, it puts them away. If he wanted to work with kids, he should go into teaching. He then transferred from the community college he was attending to San Diego State University, earned his teaching credential, and landed his first teaching position at Fallbrook.

AVID and AVID-Plus

Fallbrook's AVID program is unique among the eight programs we studied in that AVID students are assigned to classes with a select group of teachers. The AVID site team, in essence, is the group of teachers who teach the AVID elective and content area classes that enroll mainly AVID students. In key respects, the AVID program at Fallbrook stands out from others because it is organized like a career academy. The combined AVID/AVID-Plus program includes its own group of core teachers who form the site team and who teach the AVID/AVID-Plus classes.

AVID-Plus, a sister-program of AVID with approximately 90 students, is a rigorous program of study open to any sophomore, junior, or senior who wants to go to four-year university. Students are enrolled in the same content area classes as AVID students and share the same teachers. The primary difference from AVID is that there is no required AVID elective class for AVID-Plus students, and there is no binder or Cornell Notes requirement. In AVID-Plus, tutoring is available from tutors before and after school and at lunch from teachers. The AVID coordinators have no illusions about the success of AVID-Plus compared to the regular AVID program, but it does give students who might not have been on track for college an opportunity.

When the school adopted an academy structure about four years ago, the AVID site team created AVID-Plus in order to survive. More than half of the teachers who had been trained by AVID were the "movers and shakers" on campus and wanted to start their own academies. They were losing some of the best teachers to other academies and came up with the AVID/AVID-Plus academy as a way to maintain their program and, at the same time, provide an opportunity for a wider range of students to experience a rigorous curriculum and enjoy a sense of community. The AVID teachers readily admit that this approach also helps them politically. In a conservative community, there is a concern about exclusivity, serving "only minorities." AVID-Plus was created in part to meet the increasing demand by parents for AVID. When AVID-Plus was begun, Barbara feared that it might lure students away from AVID, but the opposite occurred. She pointed out, "We have kids who want to give up their elective and come into AVID. Some will go to Palomar (community college) to take a class so they can enroll in AVID." Asked about the transportability of the AVID/AVID-Plus model, the teachers speculated that even though the academy structure was an impetus for AVID/AVID-Plus in the first place, it actually makes it harder because of the problems with scheduling associated with that organizational scheme.

The AVID coordinators at Fallbrook are particularly proud of their tutorials. Mary calls them the "one essential—without the tutorial, it wouldn't be AVID." Tutorials at Fallbrook are run by the book. Students enter the classroom with tutorial sheets completed and divide into groups based on their need for the day. The college tutors—usually four or five—assume responsibility for keeping students on task, while the AVID coordinator circulates. The prohibition against homework during tutorials is strictly enforced, according to Mary. "It's a constant battle, and the only time we let up is

during the spring when there are lots of tests. Then we sometimes let them run a study session, but it's not ideal."

Tutors have to be willing to be assertive with students as well. In fact, one tutor was dropped recently for becoming more of a friend to the students than a tutor. "It's a hard line to draw," Mary observed, "but most are able to respect the boundaries." Most of the tutors are former AVID students, and finding tutors has not presented a problem since the early stages of the program. CSU San Marcos is nearby, and the program has a good reputation that can attract new tutors. Fallbrook also uses advanced high school students from time to time as tutors, however, and the program tries to foster a culture of success and peer tutoring that Mary called a "culture of mutual support."

The AVID teachers see the strengths of the Fallbrook program in the tutors, the 15-20 core teachers, and the curriculum. "The thing about the curriculum is that it works," Barbara remarked, "The methodologies give you all the tools for college: writing, time management, tutorials, where to go for help in college, how to talk to a professor."

The district's assistant superintendent, Jim Yarr, thinks that AVID has strong district support because it has committed, effective personnel and has produced results unmatched by other programs. He believes the key benefit of AVID Center support is the requirement to track data on AVID students, because it validates the program to outside agencies, the school board, and in the trenches—with other teachers. Another critical piece is that parents are required to get involved, he believes. That helps students know their parent is behind them and supports what the student is trying to accomplish. "We've had other programs with good ideas, but without the parent component, an essential piece of the puzzle."

Barbara is the only AVID teacher at Fallbrook who has taught the AVID senior class. Like other AVID teachers in this study, she has immersed herself in the details of what it takes to prepare and get seniors into college. The other two teachers are eager to follow their students into their final high school year but recognize that, at this point, that would be disadvantaging the students. They agree that one of them should be prepared to take over the senior class, but they believe that the only way to do that is to train with an extra preparation period, much like what is happening at Ramona and Valley.

Her role also includes more than teaching and managing, and she is given an extra prep period. As AVID site coordinator, she is part of the decision making process of the school, representing AVID/AVID-Plus in the Team Leader group, along with representatives of departments and other academies. She also does lots of public relations with the district and community, including the school board, Rotary Club, and other civic organizations. She makes a presentation to the board each year, for instance.

AVID is well respected, but somewhat isolated on campus—a school within a school—because of the academy structure. Since being transformed into an academy, AVID has recruited a cohort of teachers—about 20 altogether—who not only offer a rigorous curriculum, but are also open to accepting students who have not traditionally

been tracked into AP and honors. The AVID/AVID-Plus English teachers' classrooms are clustered in one area, making for easy communication and follow-through. "That may be one reason our program works very well. If AVID were spread throughout campus, with 27 English teachers, there's no way I could talk to all of them if students had a problem," Barbara pointed out.

Student Selection

Fallbrook follows standard AVID procedures for recruiting students. The teachers are careful not to select students who are over-qualified and "lack the hunger." "The true purpose of AVID is to get the kids you don't believe are going to go to college," Barbara explained. If the admissions criteria are too high, she wondered, then what about the students who really are the middle kids? Raising the bar can have an impact on the more typical AVID student as well. "We're pushing our students as high as they can go. Some may think that the only way we can have the statistics we have is that we take high-level kids, but we know that's not true," Barbara said.

The AVID program had the same counselor for 11 years, who was a great help in scheduling, but he left for the alternative school. Now the AVID team does most of the scheduling themselves, tracking students into the UC-eligible, honors, and AP courses. They work directly with data processing on the master schedule.

Fallbrook AVID enrolls about 50 freshmen each year and graduates between 30 and 40. There were 33 seniors in 2001-02. If students drop during the 10th grade, they may be replaced, but AVID seldom adds students beyond the sophomore year. Students are allowed to drop—or are dropped from the program—only if they aren't doing the work. "I've never dropped a student who's working, even with a 2.0 GPA." Two of the current seniors, for example, were struggling with their classes, but the AVID teachers refused to drop them. The teachers were confident they could enroll the students in the local community college or even CSU San Marcos, perhaps through the EAOP program.

Program Expansion

Because AVID's success at Fallbrook, the district is pushing for the program to expand. It is true that the program currently enrolls fewer than 10 percent of school population, but several factors mitigate against their adding sections. First, there is a feeling among the AVID team that expanding much beyond their current size would tend to de-personalize the experience for students. One reason Fallbrook has been successful, they explain, is that the students see AVID as a family. They believe that adding more students would threaten the level of intimacy, the opportunities for working with students one-on-one that they currently enjoy. Already, not all of the AVID kids know each other. If the program added many more students, it would be difficult for them to see each other as family members. As Mary put it, "If they're third cousins, are they really family members?"

Second, they believe most of the eligible students have been identified. Adding more students would mean they would have to relax the rules for admission to AVID. Moreover, Barbara does not believe she could teach more than her current three sections, because it would be too emotionally draining. In addition, there is a potential for resentment from other teachers in the history department, because another history teacher would have to pick up Marco's history class if he added another section of AVID. Finally, adding another AVID teacher would simply make communication among coordinators more difficult, they point out. Whether the AVID teachers will give in to pressure from above and add more sections remains to be seen.

Schoolwide Impact

"Schoolwide" doesn't mean that every student takes the AVID elective , but that the influence of AVID spreads—and not only through the AVID methodologies. Barbara pointed out, for example, that before AVID was implemented at Fallbrook, the number of Hispanic students who finished the a-g requirements was "dreadfully low." Following the addition of AVID, the number has increased annually ever since. More broadly, Mary observed, "AVID has been hugely instrumental in creating an academic atmosphere for Latinos." The students are hard-working and successful—graduating and getting scholarships.

The traditional expectation among the white community has been that their children will go to college; now the same attitude is growing in the Hispanic community. Hispanic families used to be satisfied to see their sons and daughters graduate from high school, but now they see children from other families going to college and they want their children to do the same.

"It's also true among English learners," Mary observed, "I'd say 90% say they want to go to the local community college after high school—I've been teaching for 15 years and have not seen that before. I'm convinced it's because so many Latino kids are going to college." As the principal, Mark Steffler, put it, "The way to succeed with students and get them into college is to make it a self-fulfilling prophesy: Say, 'you will go to college' and they will do it. The school culture has been AVID-ized."

Social boundaries are also breaking down in the close-knit, conservative community. At first, AVID-Plus students, who are primarily from the white community, refused to sit next to the predominantly Latino AVID students; and several parents even pulled their students out of the program to avoid contact with Latinos. Now all of that is in the past and students from both programs have become friends and some are even dating.

Student Outcomes

Fallbrook began to expand into Advanced Placement classes in 1997-98 with AP U.S. History, but it wasn't always clear sailing. One Latino student, for example, was told he was in the wrong class. But attitudes are changing, and now there are no artificial barriers such as entry exams or teacher recommendations, only the student's

preparedness. In the 2001-02 school year, more than half of AVID seniors took at least one AP class; of 33 seniors, 24 enrolled in either an AP or a college course. Several juniors and a few sophomores are also enrolled in AP classes. The AVID students have to struggle sometimes, the teachers admit; but they believe that each year the students are better prepared.

The AVID teachers believe that the rush to AP has its limitations. In their view, a solid background in rigorous college prep courses may actually be better grounding for some students. "We don't care if students necessarily have lots of AP courses as long as they are succeeding in college prep." (AVID policy, on the other hand, is that each AVID student take at least one AP course before graduating.). The Fallbrook AVID teachers monitor the AP exam pass rates to ensure that students can meet the demands of the courses and that the integrity of the courses is maintained. As Barbara said, "If schools now offer only AP courses and college prep, then I'm sorry, the classes have been watered down. I'd like to see their AP pass rates. Ours are fabulous."

For the past four years, 100% of Fallbrook's AVID graduates have been accepted to four-year universities. Aware of the high dropout rate among college freshmen, AVID has kept close tabs on its graduates. Of the 171 program graduates in 2000, over 91% enrolled in college, and of these, 95% were still enrolled after two years. All of the 2000 graduates enrolled in four-year colleges, such as UC Berkeley, UC San Diego, University of San Diego, University of Southern California, and the University of Virginia.

Loara High School

Anaheim, California

"Once you get students who need you and can't do it without you, but have the dream, your work is half done. They have to have the dream, they have to want it."
—Sue Balas, AVID Coordinator

Loara is one of eight comprehensive high schools in Anaheim, a city of approximately a quarter of a million and the home to Disneyland. Enrolling 2100 students, the school is roughly 50% Hispanic, 30% White, and 15% Asian. Nearby Disneyland, and adjoining Loara High, a small community of hotel and restaurant workers has emerged—Tijuanita. Poverty is widespread in the area which is notorious for drugs and drive-by shootings and has the reputation as among the most dangerous neighborhoods in Orange County. No one from Tijuanita went to college before the AVID program was in place.

Program History

Sue Balas has been Loara's only AVID teacher and coordinator. She joined the school faculty in 1991 and started the program a year later. Trained as an elementary school teacher, Sue never intended to teach high school. But there was a teacher surplus when she finished her degree at CSU Fullerton, and, through a twisted series of events, she landed at Loara teaching a specialized, pull-out science class and then a combination 10th grade science and English. Soon after, the school competed for a large grant that incorporated the AVID program; Sue helped write the proposal and found her home in AVID. Loara's was the first AVID program in Orange County. It began with 30 freshmen and one grade was added each year. Now, Sue teaches all the AVID classes, grades 9-12, and one section of remedial math. Although she has considered adding a fifth section of AVID, she has never managed to swing it.

Administrative support has varied over the years. Some principals have been very supportive; others treat AVID as "just another program" in an effort to be fair to other programs on campus. AVID has not been ignored, however, and received an entire classroom full of new computers in 2001. The district and board have also supported AVID with solid financial backing. Loara has been an AVID National Demonstration School since 1998, and certified with "distinction" for the past three years.

Although Sue does promote the program, she admits to flying under the radar most of the time. With her first graduating class, for example, it was her students who called and managed to get AVID placed on the school board agenda. They then convinced her to attend the board meeting under some other pretense. At the meeting, the students announced that they were all going to college thanks to the AVID program. It made a big impression on the board and, along with a plaque, the board voiced unanimous support for the program. Two veteran English teachers recalled how at first, AVID was seen as a "loser" program; Sue fought everyone from teachers to the district and eventually won

because she could show results. Now, they said, there is peer pressure among teachers to be part of AVID.

Loara's AVID program is unique among the eight Best Practices Study schools in that there has only been one AVID teacher in the 9-year history of the program. Sue teaches all four sections of AVID each year, one for each grade level. Although some schools combine grade levels, Sue is always careful to keep hers separate, because she follows a different curriculum for AVID 1, 2, 3, and 4, each with a separate preparation. If there's too much overlap, she believes, you risk losing the students from year to year. Of course, for guest speakers and other special events, the lessons are the same, and classes may be combined on those occasions.

Student Recruitment

According to Sue, the secret to a successful AVID program is recruiting the right students:

> I've tried everything. We want to look good, but if you recruit students who're too high and don't need you, they're gone in a year. On the other hand, there are some students who realistically can't get into a four-year college. So, you have to have the right students to make it work. Once you get students who need you and can't do it without you, but have the dream, your work is half done. They have to have the dream, they have to want it.

While most of the recruitment is done for the freshman year, some students are admitted as sophomores or juniors, too. "I'm a visible presence on campus," Sue said, "and students know I'm there. Those who really need help and are ready to work, I let in."

For most AVID students, leaving the program is usually not an option—Sue doggedly ensures that they do what is required in AVID. Most students who ask to leave the program have found it to be too difficult and too much work; they are ready to give up. Under those circumstances, Sue will not allow them to drop. "If it's an academic problem, they're not leaving. They have to go through me first," Sue said. Instead, she prescribes additional support, such as tutoring after school. She is relentless: "The harder I am on my students, the more they work. I'm really in their faces, but they respond—and sign up for AVID again the next year." Nothing is mandatory, and there is no "senior drop-off," because students have self-selected and realized they need AVID by their senior year. That is, by the time students are seniors, they never ask to leave the program. If they have survived that long, it is clear they will qualify for a four-year college.

Sue goes through each student's schedule with a fine tooth comb, but she says her students don't get any special treatment from counselors in terms of assignment to teachers. Once they're enrolled, she monitors their progress constantly, particularly now that she can do it on-line. In 2000, the school began posting student progress reports on the school network, so she now is able to check on her students without having to ask other teachers to complete progress reports.

One problem Sue has is that she has been successful with a number of low-performing students, so that administrators come to think she can "fix" any problem. But those students are the exception, she points out, and while all students can succeed, it takes more time for some. AVID, she says, is not intended to prepare an entire classroom of low-performing students.

Site Team

Loara's informal site team of 4-5 members meets monthly, but for the most part, Sue just keeps other members informed. The two veteran English teachers recalled how Sue built relationships with those teachers who had most AVID students and surrounded herself with people she knew would support her. There is as well a strong sense of community around Loara, with former students returning to the teach at the school. AVID is well-respected because of its visible success, and people in the schools and the community are aware of its power.

Summer School

Loara requires AVID students to take a World Cultures course in summer school between 9th and 10th grade. They are also encouraged to take world history at other schools the next summer. In an effort to broaden their experiences and prepare them for going away to college, Sue arranges for students to attend various summer programs at UC Riverside, San Diego State, and CSU Fullerton.

Tutors

The Anaheim school district pays for three AVID tutors per hour, so there is a team of tutors for each AVID period. As with the other AVID programs in the study, Sue recruits from her own students. Sue describes what she looks for in a tutor:

> The best tutors come from my program. They know what students need—the same things they needed three or four years ago in my program. They know what feels good or bad in a tutorial group. The top students don't make the best tutors, though, because they've never acted out in class or gotten in trouble. The best tutors are the ones that tested the waters a bit with the teachers. They can control the kids and make them focus.

Content knowledge and perseverance are also important. One morning during our site visit, we observed a math tutorial group struggling with a math problem; several hours later, the tutors were still trying to solve it. They wouldn't give up. Sue concluded that the teacher must have made a mistake.

When we visited the school in the fall, Sue had just lost a couple of tutors and was down to three. Even so, Sue refused to take on new tutors until she found exactly the

ones she wanted. Similarly, seniors aren't allowed to tutor until they have decided where they are going to college. "I'm not going to be the reason they stay here," Sue declared.

Sue has made it her business to understand the ins and outs of the college admissions process. "I know the gray areas better than anyone I know of who's not an admissions officer," she maintains. She has also made friends with director of admissions at CSU Fullerton and other campuses.

Program Expansion

AVID at Loara has served about the same number of students for several years, roughly six percent of the school population, and Sue has considered expanding the program. She would like to add a 9th grade section, and estimated that there are about 75 students any given year who really qualify for the program. To expand, though, she needs administrative support, which so far, hasn't materialized. The principal is noncommittal, except to say that at the present time he doesn't have the staff. Sue said she would love to replace her remedial math class, where students are struggling with basic operations, with a fifth AVID section. Whether that happens or not, will depend on several factors, including whether funding is available.

Schoolwide Impact

As one might expect, the wealthier and higher-performing students always get the information they need about college admissions, Advanced Placement, and SATs and ACTs. The counseling department makes sure they get it. Average students sometimes are left to fend for themselves. At Loara, they have come to rely on AVID students to keep up-to-date. Many of the AVID students have friends outside of AVID, and when they tell them about a requirement or an upcoming deadline, news floats across the campus. Sue believes that the school's college going rate has grown not just because AVID students are enrolling, but also because of the informal grapevine that extends from AVID.

A math teacher described how she has seen the impact of AVID on students in her classes. She knows that Sue is tough on AVID students and tracks them all the time. She recently transferred two AVID students in Course I (algebra) to a lower level math class, and two days later, they were back in her class. Their work began to improve, and their grades went up even though work became more difficult. "Two years from now," she says, "I expect to see them in advanced math." At first, she points out, students think of Sue as a tyrant, but later they come to see that she is on their side. AVID students are often unmotivated as 9th graders, but Sue somehow turns them around, so that one can see the difference of those with or without AVID. "I don't see what Sue sees in these students—somehow she can see the potential in the squirrelly 9th graders," she remarked.

Student Outcomes

Loara has a tradition of gaining university acceptances for all AVID seniors. Last year, everyone was accepted, and in 2001-02, all 30 seniors received early acceptance to

a four-year university through on-site admissions by November 2001. AVID hosted the on-site admissions for whole school and about 30 students not enrolled in AVID participated. All AVID students are required to take part. Since 1996, 99% of AVID students have been accepted to a four-year college, and most have received financial aid or scholarships. There is a lot of pride in Loara's program, too. In 2001, all of Loara's 33 graduates attended the AVID recognition celebration at UC Irvine for AVID graduates (sponsored by the AVID Regional Center), while other programs were represented only a few students.

The Advanced Placement program has been strong for 15 years, but two AP teachers credited AVID with having been instrumental in integrating AP and other advanced classes. As one put it, "Half of my class wouldn't be Hispanic if it weren't for AVID. They used to be all white." The other observed that some had criticized AVID because Sue scheduled her students into classes, but acknowledged that that was one reason the program is successful.

Ramona High School

Riverside, California

"Math gets you into college; writing keeps you there."
—Sally Griffin, AVID Coordinator

Ramona High School is located in Riverside, California, a city of 255,000 about 60 miles east of Los Angeles and home to the University of California, Riverside. The high school has an enrollment of over 2100 students—about 40% Hispanic. The school is also growing and received a huge influx of ninth graders in 2001-02.

For several reasons, the AVID program at Ramona High School in Riverside stands out. First, it is the largest AVID program in the state, with an enrollment of nearly 400 students in 12 sections and a graduating class of 79 AVID seniors in 2001. Fully one-fifth of the school is enrolled in AVID. Second, five of the six AVID teachers are from the math department. Sally Griffin, the AVID coordinator is a business/social studies teacher, but she teaches only AVID.

Program History

The current principal, Laurie Weitz, identified AVID as a partial solution to the school's high dropout rate among ninth graders when she was an English teacher there several years ago. Laurie was on the school site council, which was struggling with how to retain more 9th graders, when she attended a session on AVID by Mary Catherine Swanson at a conference for English teachers. She found the AVID program seemed to fit the bill. She pulled together a group of parents, students, a counselor, an assistant principal, and several teachers to visit Mary Catherine's classroom at Clairemont High School in San Diego. Convinced that AVID was needed at Ramona, they pitched the idea to the district and received a small stipend to pay tutors. Wanda Schneider, a business teacher at the time, was the first and only AVID teacher until a math teacher, Mike Stepp, came on board after four years.

Mike was skeptical at first and thought that AVID was just another program that would soon go away like many others. "At the end of 4 years," he said, " Wanda trooped in her graduating seniors to a faculty meeting and announced that everyone was going to a 4-year university. I was stunned." " I want to do this," he said to himself. Seven years later, Mike is still involved with AVID, teaching two sections each term. Four more math teachers have since joined the team. No one at the school can explain what attracts math teachers to AVID at Ramona, whether the program's early success, or the fact that they link 9th and 10th grade AVID classes with their math teachers. Whatever the case, it seems to be working. There is a waiting list among the other math teachers to join AVID.

After seven years of building the AVID program at Ramona, Wanda moved into the counseling department, a long-time dream of hers. Sally Griffin, also a business teacher, was selected as her replacement. Sally ran a small business before becoming a teacher

and was running the student store when she applied for Wanda's position. "I'd seen the success she'd had, and it's a good program, so when they posted the job I applied," Sally explained. The hardest part, according to Sally, was taking over Wanda's students who had been with her for three years. "I felt guilty," she said, "because I didn't know as much as I should and didn't push the kids the way I should." There was no transition period, but Wanda and Sally worked together on a daily basis, and Wanda made sure that Sally attended all the conferences for counselors that focused on admission to UC and CSU and applications for Cal-grants. Sally said she was shocked the first time she went to a UC conference and realized how much more rigorous the admissions process was becoming and how schools needed to maximize students' schedules.

Sally has been coordinator for seven years and has a reputation for taking a no-nonsense approach to the job. As the principal put it, "Sally is a strong personality—my way or the highway. Kids take a look at her and do what she says. Sally took what Wanda built and took it to new heights because of high expectations and no excuses."

AVID Focus

Gaining admission to four-year universities is the overriding goal of the AVID program at Ramona. Because of the increased competition for admission to four-year colleges in the past few years, Sally believes that many of her students who were admitted before wouldn't be today. Ramona's response has been to raise the bar. "You can't ever think that they can't do it, because I truly believe that they can," Sally said. Rigor is seen in the classes they take and in the demands of the AVID class. According to Sally, AVID students have full schedules, they can never leave school early, and they don't take any "silly" classes, like four years of ceramics. Instead, it's four years of math and science for everyone. As the district coordinator put it, "They don't play here. If you want to be in AVID, you have to step up to the plate."

In the junior and senior years, AVID is mainly focused on college applications, personal statements, and financial aid. To make sure she knows the ins and outs of the process, Sally continues to attend counseling conferences and has become an expert on admissions requirements and financial aid. "I don't think you can only be an English teacher in the AVID section at the junior and senior level," she says. She has developed a vast amount of expert knowledge over the years and keeps herself up to date through conferences and other counseling training. She is familiar with a wide range of financial aid packages. As the principal said, "We've always had college acceptance as part of the program, of course, but it is so much deeper at Ramona now. Sally has taken it to another level—for her, it's a contest."

Writing is covered through four major essays a year, including the personal statement for college applications, the Subject A essay required by UC, and the AVID write-off, a region-wide competition. As business teachers, Wanda and Sally are used to doing mock interviews, employment applications, resumes, and personal interviews, so they naturally bring their experience into AVID. Sally also tries to impress upon her students how the real world operates. "The lion picks the zebra at the end of the pack and the sides and

fringes, and you'd better be at the front or the middle—that's how the world is. The same skills you need in the world of business, you need in college." "Get along with people and quit whining," she frequently admonishes her students.

When the AVID program was first implemented, Ramona mixed all the classes so that older students could serve as role models, but they found that ineffective and separated the classes into 9-10 and 11-12 combinations. AVID for grades 9 and 10 has been blended into a 2-year curriculum that doesn't overlap from one year to the next. The curriculum for juniors focuses on testing: the ACT and SAT, and the ELM and EPT, the math and English tests required for admission to CSU campuses. Because they are often integrated with seniors, however, juniors end up doing a rough draft of everything they will do as seniors, including university applications and financial aid packages. In Sally's class, she reviews parents' tax returns and prepares an estimate for financial aid three months in advance so that there will be no confusion when the actual application is submitted. Sally files juniors' draft of their personal statement for university applications; then the next September, she pulls out them out for students to polish. "I keep dogging them until they know the process," Sally says, "This is the most important essay of their life." Combining juniors and seniors has other benefits as well—juniors can see seniors receive their acceptance letters.

Tutors

Ramona runs a strong after-school tutoring program from 3-7 p.m. four days a week that allows tutors to extend their hours and days on campus and makes tutoring in AVID a more attractive opportunity. Because Ramona has a large pool of AVID graduates and can offer more hours, finding able college tutors is never a problem. Moreover, relations with the local universities are good. A program at CSU San Bernardino, for example, subsidizes some of the tutors, picking up $6 of the $10 per hour that AVID pays, and the requirement that work-study students be confined to working on the college campus has been dropped, so those students can be recruited as well.

Math Connection

When Wanda was the coordinator, she saw that algebra 2 was an obstacle for her students. "We would get students through algebra and geometry," Wanda explained, "but in Algebra 2, they hit the wall." Their solution was to link 9th grade AVID with algebra, so the same teacher taught AVID and algebra for two periods with the same group of students. Wanda said it made a huge difference, since the algebra teacher was able to continue with algebra during the AVID period if needed. Tenth grade AVID was linked with geometry; and 11th grade AVID, with algebra 2. Since these changes have been in place, the majority of AVID students have enrolled in pre-calculus, whereas previously, virtually none made it that far. In strengthening math, students are also enrolling in higher levels of science. While it isn't always possible to schedule all AVID students this way, Ramona AVID staff work closely with the counseling department to accommodate as many students as they can. This underscores the importance of having a tight working relationship between AVID and the counseling department.

What effect does the emphasis on math have on the strong focus on writing that is a hallmark of AVID? When Mike Stepp joined AVID, he feared the lack of fit. He thought that because he had never taught writing and didn't really enjoy writing, he could not possibly teach writing. Over the past several years, he says, he learned a lot about teaching writing, and has also adjusted the AVID writing curriculum to do what he thinks is necessary. Instead of a series of essays, Mike requires only four essays throughout the year—one each quarter. He starts with the college application personal statement so kids see the purpose in doing it. Next comes persuasive writing, using the Jane Schaefer technique, which he likes because it's structured. In the third quarter, students produce an SAT-II essay. "It requires a different approach, but looking at SAT-II booklets has helped me with that," he explained. Finally, students write an essay for the UC Subject A placement. "That's an easy sell," he says, "because many of our kids don't pass the Subject A test." Other math teachers expressed similar feelings. Scott Lockman, who has taught AVID for seven years, says that even though he is a math teacher, he doesn't see teaching writing as a problem. He learned how to write essays in college and the AVID curriculum materials provide plenty of guidance.

Administrative Support

AVID is a tradition in the Riverside district, and support is strong. When the district considered cutting budgets, Ramona managed to get most of theirs reinstated. One concern at Ramona, however, is that all the schools receive the same level of funding, even though Ramona's is a much larger program. Because of the administrative demands on Sally, the principal has even considered providing her with two release periods.

Continuity of AVID leadership may present a problem, since Sally has made it clear she plans to transition into counseling just as Wanda did. The principal said it made perfect sense to her—much of what an AVID teacher does is guidance and counseling—but that doesn't make finding a replacement any easier. Obviously, the most fluid transition would be to move one of the current AVID teachers into the coordinator position. To that end, the school has been grooming math/AVID teacher Scott Lockman to be the next coordinator. Scott has been paid to work with Sally using state grant money earmarked for increasing the number of students eligible for four-year colleges. After a couple of months observing Sally first hand, however, he admitted to the principal that the job might be more than he wanted to take on.

AVID Site Team

The competition among programs on campus has heated up in the last few years. All of them want the hard-working students and the funding that comes with them. With 20% of the students enrolled, AVID is clearly holding its own. One factor in the program's success is the AVID site team and their close communication. Made up of the AVID teachers, counselors, principal, and any teacher who wants to participate in the meetings, the site team meetings are a place where general communication is handled. Sally's classroom is nestled among the math classrooms and occupies a central location

with all AVID teachers nearby. "We can be in constant communication with each other," Sally says.

Schoolwide Impact

Ramona has seen a change in climate since AVID was introduced. For years, no one expected Ramona students to go to a four-year college, and the guidance office directed them toward community colleges. Soon the counselors, other teachers, and students saw that AVID kids were making it to four-year colleges, and now all Ramona students are encouraged in that direction. Pictures of AVID successes are displayed in the school hallways, not just in AVID classrooms, so the whole school is made more aware. Former AVID students' college graduation announcements–some for Masters' degrees—are posted as well.

Principal Laurie Weitz believes that the biggest effect of AVID on campus has been that the AP program grew along with AVID. When she came to the school in the 1980s, there was no AP; now 12 AP courses are offered. "You won't walk into an AP class and not see AVID students," she observed. Since 1999, AVID has required students to take at least one AP course in their four years of high school. Most take many more than that, but one is a minimum requirement—along with AP exam. The number of students taking the SAT has also increased. Students taking PSAT has grown so much that the school sells out of tickets each year. In fact, 400 students took the exam in 2001, a third more than the year before. "It's unique in the district to have numbers like this," she said. The AVID tutors provide AVID students the support they need to succeed in AP, and Ramona has taken that schoolwide. The school offers four hours of tutoring before and after school and at lunch—by AVID tutors and others—Monday through Thursday in the library. The additional tutoring hours also help support the AVID tutors and make it worth their trouble to travel to the school from their various college campuses.

The principal is planning to offer a 9th grade required study skills class next year that uses AVID methodologies. She is also considering the creation of an advisory period. "We're going to continue to grow AVID in as many ways as possible," she said. One reason AVID students do well, the principal believes, is that they have a significant adult looking over them, shepherding them through four years of high school. A schoolwide committee is looking into alternative schedules that will allow teachers to be with students for longer blocks of time, while reducing the case load. "AVID taught us," she explains, "that when you really get to know a set of kids and help them through four years, you can have a tremendous impact."

Student Outcomes

Ramona AVID has a great record of attaining college admissions and acceptances for its graduating seniors. Virtually all the students are accepted to four-year colleges, though a few may only qualify for a community college. The vast majority enroll in four-year universities; in 2000, the college-going rate was 100%. Of the 79 graduates in 2001, all but five were accepted to four-year colleges; the others enrolled in a community

college or joined the military. Nearly two-thirds (49) of those accepted to universities received scholarship or financial aid support. Over half of the class was accepted to at least one University of California campus, and 23 students gained acceptance to three or more. More than 40 percent of the seniors attended a UC—13 enrolled at UC Riverside; 7 at UC Davis; four at UC Berkeley; and the others at UC Santa Cruz, UC San Diego, UC Santa Barbara, and UCLA. Thirty-six students enrolled at a California State University. More than a third enrolled at CSU San Bernardino, but four students selected CSU Chico, based largely on their impressions from a Ramona AVID Northern College road trip to ten campuses. Similarly, UC Davis attracted several students who might never have considered going there without the experience of having visited the campus.

AVID at Ramona has also had an impact on Advanced Placement enrollment. The following table shows, for example, that AVID students make up nearly half of the students in AP, even though they represent only 20 percent of the total student population. More than half of the students in AP English Language, AP Physics, AP Spanish, and AP Art History are AVID students.

Ramona AVID Enrollment in Advanced Placement Courses: 2001-02

Course	Total	AVID	% AVID
Advanced Calculus	26	10	38.5%
Statistics	10	4	40.0%
English Literature	29	9	31.0%
English Language	20	15	75.0%
Biology	14	6	42.9%
Physics	12	8	66.7%
US History	18	8	44.4%
American Government	13	2	15.4%
Chemistry	33	14	42.4%
Spanish	38	24	63.2%
Art History	36	20	55.6%
Environmental Science	46	21	45.7%
Total	295	141	47.8%

Southwest High School

San Diego, California

"We've been focusing on skills that match exactly what AVID wants to institutionalize and has been doing for 15 years sort of in isolation. Now we've taken it schoolwide."
—John Devore, Principal

Only five miles from the U.S.- Mexico border, Southwest High School is the southern-most high school in the United States. Eighty-two percent of the students are Hispanic, and another 11 percent, Filipino; 80 percent come from homes where English is not spoken, and one-third are English learners. Many of the families in the community face poverty; 35 percent of the students are eligible for free/reduced price lunches and Title I. A few years ago, because of these challenges and others, the school slipped into a state of poor performance and lowered expectations. By expanding the influence of AVID and its methods, however, the school has recently begun to turn around its academic programs.

Program History

The AVID coordinator, Heléne Matthews, began the program in the spring of 1987. An ESL and drama teacher at the time, she was asked by her principal to look into AVID, and after only one fall term of planning, she put together the first AVID class. As one of the first 17 schools in San Diego County, Southwest was a pioneer in more ways than one. With a single white binder to guide her, many things had to be created from scratch, even the procedures for hiring and paying tutors. In fact, the first group of tutors wasn't paid for the spring term until September. Mary Catherine Swanson had moved from Clairemont High School to the San Diego County Office of Education, but a comprehensive support infrastructure had not yet been developed. Heléne recalls how she used to call Mary Catherine directly, and spent many hours on the phone with her trying to figure out what to do. Eventually, one white binder of AVID materials became a whole library. When the concept of national demonstration schools first appeared, Heléne successfully applied, and Southwest has maintained its status since, for at least eight years.

Despite the obvious challenges of getting the program off the ground, administrative support was strong in the beginning. "Without the fabulous support, I couldn't have done what I did," Heléne recalls. The original principal moved to another school, however, and his replacement had other priorities. "For two years, I was upset, but I went ahead anyway," Heléne said. Things improved after that, and finally, in 1999 the current principal, John Devore, joined the school. In Heléne's view, "He's the best!"

Because of the emphasis on professional development in AVID, Heléne said she embraced the idea of personal development for herself and took advantage of the many opportunities to increase her skills and knowledge, both at the County Office of Education and the AVID Summer Institute. "I saw it as adding to the tools in my

basket," explained Heléne. Over the years, she has reformulated her idea of what an AVID teacher needs to do in the classroom and how it differs from the role of a regular classroom teacher. She sees the AVID teacher as more of a facilitator and advocate for students than someone transmitting information. "It has opened my eyes to what students need to graduate and get into college—complete a-g requirements, take the SATs. I became more aware of what's happening on other parts of campus. It really transformed my self-concept as a teacher and facilitator, empowering students to take charge of their education."

The program now operates six sections of AVID with 177 students. Heléne teaches three sections, including the senior seminar; Mark Carpizo, an English teacher, teaches two sections of AVID grades 9-11; and Pablo Roncoroni teaches a section of bilingual AVID that includes students in grades 9-11. The bilingual AVID class is designed to serve recent immigrants, helping them develop the skills they need for admission to college. Most of the instruction is in Spanish, and bilingual students from the AVID class serve as peer tutors. The expectation is that they will have mastered enough English to transition into regular AVID after one year.

AVID Essentials

In Heléne's view, student recruitment and placement, tutors, organizational skills, the coordinator, administrative support, and channeling students into rigorous classes are keys to the success of an AVID program. If students don't meet the selection criteria, and without the proper motivation, they won't succeed. If their academic performance is too low, they likely will not change their habits; if they are too high academically, they don't think they need AVID.

Tutors are also critical. As Heléne put it, "Without tutors, you don't have a program." The connection between students and tutors is really special, according to Heléne. For one thing, tutors provide bridge to the students' seeing themselves as college students. Often they live in the apartments and see each other in the community. Southwest only recruits from the pool of former AVID students, although others occasionally do get selected. For those without AVID experience, in particular, training cannot be given short shrift. Heléne observed that most of those who have no AVID experience at first assume that tutoring is one-on-one. For AVID, tutors need a different mindset.

Organizational and study skills, including Cornell Notes and the binders, are also of paramount importance. To be successful in AVID and beyond, students need to make those a regular habit. They need to learn to take notes—even when they don't think they need them. Heléne believes strongly in directing students into more advanced classes. But before you push the eagle from the nest, Heléne says, you need to give him the tools to fly.

The AVID coordinator wears many hats and must know how to keep several balls in the air at once. Heléne does not find the job particularly difficult, but it is time-

consuming and requires careful organizing. Again, Heléne's administrative support has varied over the years, so she has seen how hard it is to flourish without it. Besides the budgetary support, she appreciates Devore because he is not just a visionary, but someone who sees things through.

Schoolwide Reform

When the current principal, John Devore, came to the school in 1999, he pulled together the school site team to focus reform. "When I arrived," he recalled, "there were low expectations in general and no focal point for what we wanted to do. The school had been collecting data for 2 years, but hadn't done anything with it, and more than 1000 students were 2.5 grade levels behind in reading, writing and math." The site team began to turn things around. They decided that literacy was their number one charge, and a WASC review said basically the same thing. The team's approach was to try to change the paradigm for all teachers and infuse reading and writing into every classroom—from English to math and physics. As Devore put it, "Each teacher is first a reading and writing teacher, and they do it through content."

Because of the way it promotes writing across the curriculum, AVID has clearly been a catalyst at Southwest. Devore says he is "relentless" about using the ideas from AVID that call for institutionalizing writing throughout the school. When the literacy reform initiative began, about 20 teachers had been trained at the AVID Summer Institute, but with over 100 teachers in the school, such strategies needed to be spread wider and deeper.

An intensive staff training effort was begun in fall 1999. An initial step was to create a reading and writing handbook for every teacher that laid out ways to focus on literacy and incorporate it into content lessons. Their approach embraced the principles of reciprocal teaching, among other strategies. The writing handbook laid out in clear language the steps for teachers to follow in teaching writing, and how to coach students in each phase of writing. Whereas some teachers were accustomed to simply asking students to read a passage and then assigning an essay, now they were to facilitate the entire process from pre-reading through final editing.

Taking a page from the AVID book, teachers are also coached in ways to use and reflect on data. Every six weeks, the principal disseminates schoolwide data on student progress, including the percentage of Ds and Fs, compared to the district by course and period. Teachers are expected to reflect on the distribution of grades, student work, and what they can do differently. This has been a real shift, Devore explains, "because teachers don't reflect unless we call time out and ask them to." The *process* of collecting data, student work, and reflecting is what teachers need to grasp, according to Devore. An additional goal is to develop "collective accountability" in the departments. Just as the AVID site team is accountable collectively, so should each department be. As an example, Devore pointed to the fact that 100% of AVID seniors were accepted to a four-year university, "There's some collective accountability going on there." The hope is that teachers will find solutions in the reading and writing strategies. He has also made it

clear that teachers can sacrifice breadth for depth if that is necessary to develop writing and increase understanding. "We hope that we're institutionalizing AVID methodologies that support providing kids with the capacity to be successful not only in school, but in their life," he said.

An additional cog in the reform wheel is the development of support classes for algebra that are run just like AVID tutorials two days a week. If students in the 9th or 10th grade score in the bottom quartile in reading or math, they are required to take a math support class for algebra, so they have two hours a day of math. In the same way that AVID tutoring supports students in AP and other advanced classes, the math support classes give students who are struggling with algebra the extra time and coaching they need to be successful.

Student Outcomes

The principal was able to point to several emerging improved outcomes for students that could be attributed to the literacy effort and to AVID. One such outcome demonstrated improvements in writing as measured by the district's writing sample required for graduation. Southwest went from 8th to 3rd in the district in two years, and from a 28% pass rate to 33% in the same time period. In 2000, 172 (44%) seniors had not mastered the district writing sample when school began. The first month of the school year, 100 passed. "As kids stay here more than one year, you can see the cumulative impact of our emphasis on writing," observed Devore.

Devore wants to ensure that students who graduate and get accepted to four-year college don't need remediation in English or math. That means improving their scores on the EPT and ELM tests required by CSU, and to do that, he believes, students must take more rigorous courses all through high school and also receive the support they need to be successful in them. If the school's mission is to eliminate the need for remediation in writing in college, then teachers in 9th and 10th grade need to know how to teach students to write well.

Although two-thirds of Southwest students attend college, only about one in five enroll in a four-year university. In contrast, nearly 100% of AVID students do. Of the 45 students in the 2001 graduating class, nearly half enrolled at a California State University; 10 at a UC campus, and nine at a private university. Four students elected to attend the local community college, and one chose the military. Among the UCs represented were Berkeley, Los Angeles, Riverside, Santa Barbara, and San Diego. San Diego State University attracted the most students (16), and nine students chose the Alliant International University in San Diego, a private university with six California locations and campuses in Mexico City and Nairobi, Kenya.

Advanced Placement. Schoolwide, the number of students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses doubled in the last 3 years, and the number of AP sections went from 16 to 24. In 2000, 498 students took the AP test, twice the number three years before. In 2001, the number had risen to 720. AP has been opened up, with admissions criteria

largely eliminated. Counselors are advised that if students have As and Bs, they qualify for AP. Instead of telling a student who wants in "No," they are admitted and given support, like AVID. AVID, in fact, is the primary support vehicle for increasing AP enrollment. In some cases, if a student wants to enroll in AP, then enrollment in AVID is required. If that isn't possible, an alternative support is provided, such as after school tutoring. In addition, an AP readiness course will be offered after the schools' summer school bridge program this year. Online AP coaching is another option that is being developed. Some teachers complained that opening access to advanced classes was sabotaging the honors program and lowering standards. But Devore disagreed: "We're not lowering our standards, we're ramping up what kids can do."

As one might expect, the increases in enrollment have been accompanied by a reduction in AP pass rates. In 2001, 56% passed their AP exam, compared to more than 70% in the past. But the principal says he isn't worried; he knows they are going in the right direction. In 2001, Southwest's AP pass rate nevertheless still ranked third in the district, despite the school's demographics and opening the door to AP.

AVID involvement in AP is strong, as can be seen in the following table. In 2001, AVID students made up nearly 20 percent of the students in AP, even though they account for only 10 percent of the total student population. More than one-fourth of the students in AP Economics, AP Spanish Literature, and AP US Government are AVID students. Graduating seniors in 2001 took an average of over four AP courses each. The reforms being implemented that link AP courses with AVID should further increase the representation of AVID in AP.

Southwest AVID Enrollment in Advanced Placement Courses: 2000-01

Course	Total	AVID	% AVID
Calculus	24	8	33.3%
Economics	26	11	42.3%
English Language	62	7	11.3%
English Literature	32	5	15.6%
European History	27	0	0.0%
Physics	26	3	11.5%
Spanish Language	133	16	12.0%
Spanish Literature	64	20	31.3%
US Government	49	14	28.6%
US History	56	4	7.1%
Total	499	88	17.6%

Valley High School

Elk Grove, California

"The first rule for the AVID coordinator is to protect your students and the integrity of the program through presentations to the board, the superintendent's cabinet, public speaking, and training."

—Sarah Shelburne, AVID coordinator

Valley High School in Elk Grove, south of Sacramento, was the first AVID program in northern California, opening with one section of AVID in 1990. The program spread gradually, and now AVID is in all middle and high schools in the Elk Grove Unified School District. The AVID program at Valley has been a national demonstration program for several years and certified with "distinction" for the last three.

Valley is working hard to improve its college-going rate. The school enrolls about 2500 students, largely minority, and roughly one-third are English learners, representing 32 different languages. While over two-thirds of graduates pursue higher education, only about 32% enroll in four-year colleges—nearly 20% of these are AVID students. Valley has developed a partnership with Cosumnes River College, literally across the street, so students can easily take college courses in combination with their high school schedule. The school operates Teacher and Health Academies, as well as MESA, and is proud of its college and career office that assists students with information on colleges, applications, and financial aid. On the other hand, Valley has a reputation for being a tough school in a low-income neighborhood, and this makes it difficult to recruit teachers and, more critical for AVID, college tutors.

Program History

The AVID coordinator, Sarah Shelburne, began her teaching career as an English teacher at Valley, and four years later, inaugurated the AVID program in 1990 with one section of 9th graders. At first she split her time between AVID and English. As AVID grew, she began working with AVID fulltime. In 1999, she expanded her position and became an AVID Region 3 Regional Coordinator. In that capacity, she oversees the programs at 12 middle and high schools, most of them in her district. In 2000, she further divided her time by accepting a position as district AVID coordinator. Officially, she works 60% with the Regional Center and 40% with the school and district, but she admits that each of her responsibilities takes more of her time than expected.

Administrative and board support have been strong from the program's inception, and the current superintendent, David Gordon, is a clear advocate. The assistant superintendent, a former assistant principal at Valley, has been a major force behind expanding AVID district-wide. With support from the school board members, AVID is now in every middle school and high school. The district pays for the AVID curriculum materials, tuition for several teachers to attend the AVID Summer Institute, and an extra prep period for the coordinator at each school. As Sarah explained, "Ours is a progressive, data-driven district, and the support has been terrific." She attributes the

success and spread of the program in part to her own emphasis on public relations. She makes a board presentation each year, and her students are trained to be sophisticated public speakers who are not intimidated by the process. "I've come to understand how important it is to put our success forward," she said. It has paid off. As Sarah's responsibilities expand, however, the prospect of having to replace her at the school site has emerged. Her political savvy and seniority on campus are recognized by the other AVID teachers, who pointed out that Sarah knows and has credibility with the key people (teachers, district people), but also knows whom to ask for what. According to Melissa Greenwalt, one of the other two AVID teachers, taking over the political, rather than curricular aspects, would be the greatest challenge for anyone.

The program currently includes 121 students in five sections of AVID. Sarah teaches one section of seniors, and Glenn Pope, a government and world history teacher who has been with AVID for several years, teaches 10th grade AVID; Melissa, an English teacher who has been teaching AVID for two years, has three sections—two 9th grade and one 11th. The program has been an AVID National Demonstration School for several years, and certified with distinction as well.

Tutors

Enlisting and maintaining tutors has been an on-going challenge at Valley. Because of its location and the school's "negative" reputation, Valley has always struggled to get good tutors. Sarah has been able to link up with the local universities, like Sacramento State and UC Davis, but from either campus, it is at least a half-hour drive each way to Valley. Perhaps more critical is Valley's reputation vis-à-vis other schools in the district. Elk Grove High School is nearby, and most tutors choose to go there because of the differences in reputation. "The tutors we do have are dedicated," Sarah observed, "but we need more." She said that in the past she had tried community college students and seniors as tutors, but without much success. She is exploring the senior option once again, however. Her current plan is to train seniors to be tutors during the period when they serve as teachers' aides. AVID students would probably not be included—their schedules are too full.

Role of the AVID Coordinator

Sarah also stressed the counseling component of the AVID coordinator's role. In the past few years, she has concentrated on continuing education for college counseling to see what colleges are looking for and what is important on applications. In 2001, she attended conferences for the Western Association for College Admissions Counselors and National Association for College Admissions Counselors to better prepare herself. As Sarah explained, "Until four years ago, I assumed that GPA and test scores were most important factors in admissions and so that's what I preached. Now I know that rigor of classes is most important and so I've had success getting students into rigorous curriculum."

By assuming the role of a college counselor, Sarah has immersed herself in the arcana of admissions testing—the SAT, ACT, and all their different modules. She even takes sample student transcripts with her to the meetings and shows them to the college admissions officers to find out what they are looking for. "What advice can I give this student?" she asks. "It's been a staff development opportunity that's really taught me a lot," she said. She learned to look at more than just the University of California's a-g requirements, including specific math courses and how to read data on college-going rates. She now guides her AVID students in how to read and understand their transcripts, figure their class rank, and take responsibility for their own path toward college admission.

In her role as regional and district coordinator, Sarah models lessons at other schools on how to utilize transcripts and understand the scope and sequence that students need to enroll in Advanced Placement courses. If a student is able to take geometry in the 9th grade, then he or she should be on track for at least pre-calculus or honors pre-calculus, she says, with honors algebra 2 along the way. "That kind of training permeates all I do," she observes. The fine attention to student schedules also features prominently in her role as AVID coordinator. Even though her schedule has been reduced to a single AVID class, she still schedules each AVID student into their classes and monitors their progress closely.

Sarah feels strongly that students and teachers must be self-selected for AVID and must want to be there. "I don't think I've ever seen a program thrive with a teacher who is dragging feet or was assigned or students were put in willy-nilly."

Student Recruitment and Selection

Most of the recruiting for AVID is done with the general population at the two feeder schools. Each has a two-year-old AVID program, so their graduates are now reaching the high school for the first time. Sarah has come to recognize that GPA is not always the most reliable predictor of student success. Students from the middle school, she points out, can have 4.0 GPA and still read 2-grade levels below their peers. Thus, in her recruitment, she has also begun looking at the rigor of students' courses, not just their GPA.

One feeder school is on a year-round schedule with four tracks. In the recruitment process, Sarah first meets with the principal, then the counselors, one per track. Then the counselors meet with track teachers and compile lists of recommended students, which are then sent to Valley. Sarah invites all the students on the lists to a presentation by her and a group of AVID students from her class. The AVID candidates are given an application form, and then the applicants are interviewed by Sarah, a site team member, and a student. About half of the AVID freshmen are chosen than way; the others are generally siblings of current AVID students.

New Essentials

Sarah recommended reading be included besides writing as an AVID essential. Many of her Valley students read at 4th or 5th grade level, and reading is especially critical for the many English language learners. "Every student in AVID at Valley could benefit from reading instruction," Sarah says.

Sarah also observes that professional development for AVID coordinators needs to focus on the affective aspects of operating an AVID program. "We assume that a person who's asked to take on AVID knows how to create affective environment, a family feeling, but I don't think that's always true," she says. Many of the teachers asked to take on AVID are fairly new and "don't understand that the AVID classroom is a completely different world from subject area instruction." Her point is that the many roles of the AVID teacher need to be addressed. AVID requires more than following the curriculum, and the teacher needs to know how to connect with students.

Schoolwide Impact of AVID

AVID is having an impact on instruction at Valley in several ways. First, it is quite common for teachers to require that students keep binders or take Cornell Notes. Most teachers at least require binders; in fact, Melissa has found that some of her AVID students need five binders, because each teacher requires a separate binder. Not all teachers require note-taking, but several of those who do correct and grade them. An Advanced Placement physics teacher remarked, for example, that Cornell Notes and an agenda were required by the science department. He attended the AVID Summer Institute in San Diego and credited AVID with having affected the way he teaches—"I'm a lot more structured now," he observed. Another effect is the "accountability factor": Academies, clubs and other programs on campus now require progress reports, similar to those used in AVID.

AVID has also had a role in opening access to honors and AP courses in the school. AP classes that used to have six students now have 30 and are much more diverse—many from AVID. In the past, for example, a writing test, grades, and teacher recommendations were required for enrollment in AP English, but not now. Sarah schedules her students directly into AP. Often, the only way teachers know students are in AVID, she said, is when students bring their progress reports around, and the teacher says, "Oh, you're in AVID!" There are course prerequisites, such as biology and at least a B in math for AP Chemistry, but aside from that, there are no formal restrictions on enrollment. Sarah is often able to negotiate entry for even the borderline cases, because of the AP teachers' professional respect for AVID, and the fact that teachers know AVID will be there to support the students.

Opening up of AP classes has been a slow process, according to Sarah, but progress is being made. In 2001, instead of a single AP English class, which is a school tradition, there are now two; and many of the students are from AVID. The AP English teacher pointed out that many AVID students lack experience with literary analysis and terms

that feature prominently in the course and recommended that channeling more students into honors English as a prerequisite to AP to give them the background they need.

Third, AVID's impact on the school can be seen in terms of factors such as the four-year college-going rate, which increased from 12% to 32% in just the past few years. In 2000, 28 of 132 seniors (21%) meeting the UC a-g requirements were in AVID.

Student Outcomes

In the fall of 2001, 45 percent of AVID students were enrolled in AP or honors classes. Among the 28 AVID graduates in 2000, all but one received acceptance to a four-year university; in 2001, all but four of 26 did. In 2001, 40 percent were accepted to CSU; 20 percent to UCs; and 60 percent to private and out-of-state universities. A similar pattern occurred the year before, when 88 percent received CSU acceptances; 10%, UC; and 64 percent, private or out-of-state.

What distinguishes Valley from the other schools in the study is the large number of acceptances to private, out-of-state, and historically black colleges. Among those represented in 2001 were Hampton University, Florida A&M, Dillard University, Clark Atlanta, Texas Southern, West Point Military Academy, and Alabama A&M. In 2000, Grambling, Bethune-Cookman College, and Southern A& M were listed also.

Despite the fact that many of Valley's AVID students attend out-of-state colleges, their representation within the UC and CSU systems is strong. Of the 31 freshmen enrolled in UCs from Valley High School in fall 2000, eight were from AVID—26 percent. Out of 85 freshmen enrolled at CSU campuses that year, 13 (15%) were from AVID. And AVID only makes up about five percent of the Valley enrollment.

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